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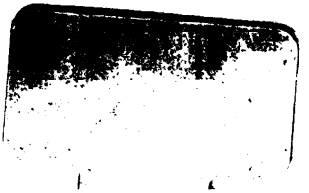

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H. Broadbent

Wealth & Want: A Social Experiment

made & described by H. B. Edited by the

Rev. George Masterman.

1885. pp. 147.

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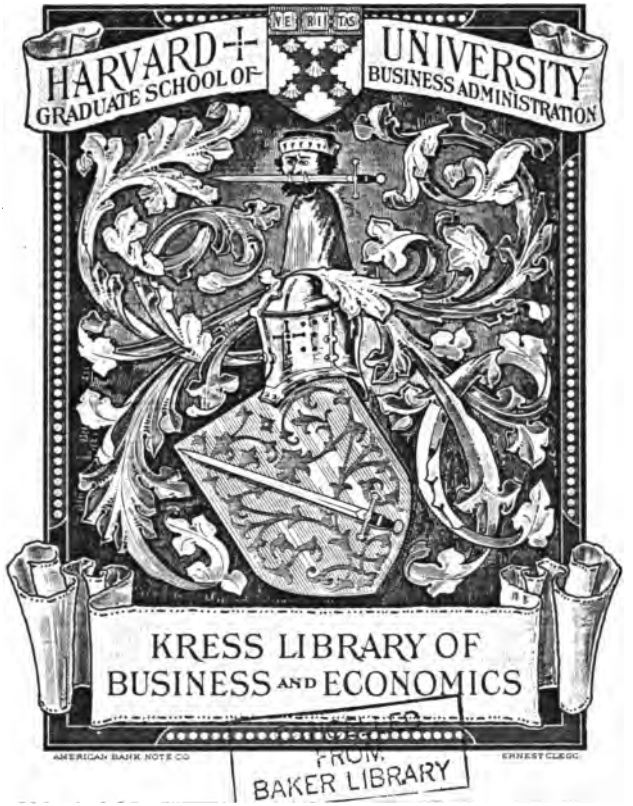

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WEALTH AND WANT:

A Social Experiment made and described by

H. BROADBENT, Esq.

LONDON:
WALTER SCOTT, 14 PATERNOSTER SQUARE.
1885.

THIRTIETH THOUSAND.

Crown 8vo, 400 Pages, Price one Shilling, Paper Cover.

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BIND FLAT

WEALTH AND WANT:

A Social Experiment made and described by H. Broadbent, Esq.

EDITED FOR THE PRESS BY THE

REV. GEORGE MASTERMAN.

LONDON:
WALTER SCOTT, 14 PATERNOSTER SQUARE,
AND NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.
1885.

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TO THE READER.

THE following pages speak for themselves, but some apology is needed for the form in which the results of my friend's experience have been submitted to the public.

These letters were never intended for publication at the time they were written. They are simply a friendly correspondence between two young men, recounting incidents as they happened, without pretension to finish or style, and entirely unmodified by knowledge of the event. The letters published by no means represent the whole that I received from him during the two years the experiment lasted; but though I have suppressed some as immaterial, those which I have published have not been altered or amended in any way.

I take little credit to myself for this forbearance, so far as it relates to the letters of

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my friend, because any alteration I could have made in them would not have improved them in point of either lucidity or style. But in my own letters there were many things, both in thought and style, which I could willingly have disclaimed as my own; but I have published them, if only to show what feeble support my friend had from me, and how many times I contributed to his errors. I have not heard from Mr. Broadbent for months, nor have I consulted him as to the publication of these letters; but as, in his last letter, he gave me leave to declare the results of his experiment, I think I cannot do it more effectually than in this manner and in his words.

GEORGE MASTERMAN.

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WEALTH AND WANT.

LETTER I.

HENRY BROADBENT to GEORGE MASTERMAN.

OXFORD, *3rd January* 1882.

MY DEAR GEORGE—I feel I should apologise for not having written sooner to wish you a happy New Year; but, I believe that before you get to the end of this letter, you will see that, if I have deferred my good wishes, it is only that I may make them more acceptable. I know, my dear fellow, that the happiness of others, and especially of the poor, is as dear to you as your own; nay, the accounts which come to our tutor of your work in Hull, show it is even dearer. When I saw you ordained, and knew against what giants of vice and misery you were girding on your sword, I envied you as a civilian in the days of Waterloo must have envied the veterans who took part in it. From my friend

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you became my hero—instead of Nisus you were Æneas—or rather you were Achilles, the hero and friend in one.

For weeks after you went down I was miserable. I thought of you constantly. I cursed the wealth that clogged me, and denied the right to follow in your footsteps. I began to realise the truth of what my writer—the only writer of the century—calls the stern parable of the camel and the needle's eye; and I can say, without hesitation, that three weeks ago, if some kind fairy had offered to exchange me with a poor man's son, I should have hailed the prospect with rapture then, and have been a miserable man now.

I think I see you as you read this letter. You have just smiled, and taken up your pen to congratulate me on my engagement—to hope she is nice, etc., etc. Never more mistaken in your life. And yet I am in love; but it is love of a purely Platonic kind, for my love is a book, and my goddess a principle.

In short, you remember that Amers promised when he got to New York to send me any striking works which he might find there. His packet arrived a week ago, and I think I may say that from then till now I have thought of nothing else day or night—not even of you.

Among the books was one called *Progress and Poverty*, by one Henry George, a writer hitherto unknown to me, though Amers tells me he was well known in the States. The title attracted me. I plunged into it. I have read and re-read it, and it has revolutionised my existence. I send it by this post in the hope that you will at once read and return

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it; but I cannot resist making a short analysis of it, if only to show how thoroughly I have grasped it.

Mr. George, like you and me, has been struck—grieved—by the enormous difference between the richest and poorest classes in this country, and even in America. He finds that in the backwoods of America this striking difference does not exist: that there are no paupers if there are no millionaires. Feeling confident that such a state of things is infinitely preferable to the hateful inequality of older countries, he proceeds to determine the causes of the difference.

After briefly showing that the only source of wealth is labour, and that the current notion that capital is necessary to, or has anything to do with, the employment of labour or the payment of wages, is erroneous; he naturally concludes that the whole of the produce of labour should be paid to the labourer. He next grapples with and utterly destroys the hateful theory of Malthus and his followers, among whom I regret to say are men hitherto reputed our greatest thinkers, that population must always be in a state of struggle for the means of subsistence; and, therefore, that vice and misery are devices ordained by a benevolent Providence to compensate for blunders in His own laws of the universe. Please do not suppose I mean any irreverence; but really so monstrous a theory deserves to be placed in the most repulsive light—that of blasphemy—in which it is possible to regard it. Mr. George has discovered the true source of vice and misery, not in the laws of the Creator, but in the iniquity of the created. He shows triumphantly that there is room for all on this wide globe, and that where want and misery reside, is also where tyranny and

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oppression flourish. All this, however, you will read for yourself. It does not seem to me absolutely essential to the remainder of the book because the giant therein overcome is totally different, a wolf in sheep's clothing, who has, under the guise of law and order, slain his tens of thousands, when oppression and tyranny were slaying their thousands.

Mr. George discovers—as he says any of the stupid political economists before him might have discovered, if they had looked at simple types of society instead of confusing themselves with the complex problems of civilisation—Mr. George discovers that the essential difference between backwoods settlements, where all is right, and a crowded country like England, where all is wrong, lies in the fact that in the former there is no rent, while in the latter there is.

Now what is rent? It is a payment made by one man to another for the privilege of living on land which was created for all. Instead of remaining stationary, I am sorry to say that rent tends to rise; and I shudder to think how much misery I and my family have inflicted on the human race by means of it. In short, I can only class rent when exacted by private persons with the rack, the thumbscrew, and other instruments of torture by which the feudal barons extorted money from their miserable dependants.

Let me put a case. A certain piece of land produces annually £100 worth of crop, after deducting the cost of seed, but not that of labour. One man, A, tills this land, paying no rent. He makes £100 a-year, a handsome wage, but yet only the produce of his own labour. The land, however, belongs to another man, who has his eye on our friend A. Let us suppose that all

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the other land of the country will produce £50 worth of crop on tracts capable of being worked by one man. Population grows, a town rises near the productive farm, and people gradually cultivate the poorer land, getting £50 rather than nothing. Here, then, is the chance of the landlord. He goes to one of the £50 farmers (B), and offers him A's land if he will pay £45 a-year rent. B jumps at the offer, since he makes £5 a-year more for the same labour. A sees the coming storm. It will cost him £15 to move out. He can then only hope for a £50 plot of land; so he offers the landlord £50 a-year rent, stays in, and does the same work for half the money. Now, compared with other labourers, A is not so badly off, and ought rather to be grateful that he ever could make £100 a-year, than querulous because he cannot make it now. Besides, the proximity of the town has probably improved his market, or enabled him to use labour-saving machinery, and work the rest of his time in a factory; or he gets his *quid pro quo* in having friends about him. In short, there is no doubt that it pays to have a town near a farm.

Well let us suppose that A, though getting not the full produce of his farm, is not fifty per cent. worse off, I want to know who gets what he does not get. The increase of value was due to the town; but the town does not get it. The competition which emphasised that increase of value was due to the other farmers of B class; but they don't get it. Who does? Why, the landlord who has been sitting about, smoking his pipe, and drinking his beer, with nothing on earth to do but see that A does not get too rich. It is evident that there is no limit to this state of things, for it is

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only necessary for some one to be working a piece of land, that will yield only £25 a-year, and A's rent will be raised to £75 a-year. But observe. The only things which make land productive at all are labour and capital (for though not essential, capital is an advantage). Every day the proportion of their joint produce which they are allowed to share becomes less and less; every day they become poorer and poorer. Capital does not feel it so much. The rate of interest falls, but capital can go elsewhere. Not so the miserable labourer. He gives up first his beer, then his tobacco, then his meat, then he pawns his clothing, at last he starves—starves in the midst of a profusion which he alone has produced. Is not this monstrous?

The landlord all the while is loitering in London, gambling under the sun of Italy, or idling in the streets of Paris. He has done nothing. The state has worked, the labourer has worked, capital has been employed, and he has reaped the fruit. What is the remedy? It is simple. Confiscate rent—turn out the landlord—make the state the sole landowner—let it devote as much as is necessary to the exigencies of government, and divide the remainder among the starving labourers who made it.

I find I have already filled eight pages. What fruit this has borne in my mind, you shall know in my next letter. In the meantime, I think, I may wish you not only a happy new year, but a happy new era, for rely upon it this book is the germ of a period of felicity, such as has been hoped for, but never attained since the world began.—I am, dear George, your delighted friend, HENRY BROADBENT.

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LETTER II.

The Rev. GEORGE MASTERMAN to HENRY BROADBENT, Esq.

5th January 1882.

MY DEAR HARRY—Your letter and your book arrived at the same time yesterday, and if I do not become a convert to the new doctrine, I shall at least be convinced that you are the same warm-hearted fellow as ever.

I have not had time to read the book through, but I have glanced at the main features and find them in accordance with your analysis. Of course I shall read it; but in the meantime a few ideas occur to me which I jot down as first impressions. I notice you say, "Turn out the landlords," and Mr. George says, what amounts to the same thing, "Confiscate rent." I cannot help thinking this a very strong measure; and I do not see that either you or Mr. George mean to compensate the landlords. Now, who first appropriated land I do not stop to inquire: but there can be no doubt that neither the offenders nor the offended in the transaction are alive now. It is equally certain that nearly all the holders of land now have purchased the right to possess it by means of the result of labour. Surely these men ought to be reimbursed? I do not like to mention a matter of personal interest to you, but of course you see that you are striking a blow at your own fortune.

I remember your father, and know you will agree with me that no man could be more strictly honourable in all his doings or a better landlord, and yet he

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saw no harm in taking rent. Now, were he still alive, I must confess that, justice to the contrary notwithstanding, it would grieve me excessively to see him deprived of his property. You, of course, are in a position of "greater freedom and less responsibility," because you have no one dependent on you, being an only son, and your mother is dead. But consider the case of many families, depending for their bread on the rents of land. I am afraid that, without some measure of compensation, the immediate effect of your reform would be to create at least as many paupers as you relieved.

You see all landlords do not loiter and gamble and idle; for instance, yourself. Nevertheless, I am prepared to be convinced; for I must say I cannot escape from Mr. George's reasoning. There is one part of your letter, however, to which I must take exception. I believe you will agree with me when I point it out, because you wrote somewhat hastily, and the sentiment is a quotation. Mr. George, in various parts of the book, advocates his measure of reform on the ground that its efficiency is, so to speak, a proof of the beneficence of God. It appears that there was in his mind a tendency to infidelity; and that "back of his theory," as he would say, there is one still. Now I hope this tendency is not in your mind. I admit the theory is striking. I do not deny it is true, but I should be quite prepared to find that Mr. George was entirely wrong, and yet not deny that the laws of God were entirely right.

I know you too well not to be sure that you will try to give effect to this new theory. Though I do not yet see how, you may be disappointed. Let us

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therefore at once agree that this is an experiment entirely apart from religion, and refuse to make moral deductions from economic facts. I suspect you accuse me of importing a page or two of my last sermon into this letter, so I shall say no more. But I hope in your next letter, to which I look forward with the greatest interest, you will put in one or two words just to show that you consent to this arrangement.

Though I fear the tutor's informant is too well disposed to me, I must say I think I am getting on well here. I like the work, and I hope the people like me—and yet there are times when I would give a good deal more than I have to be stroking an eight at Oxford, or going to a "wine" in your rooms.—I am, your sincere friend,

GEORGE MASTERMAN.

LETTER III.

HENRY BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

7th January 1882.

MY DEAR OLD BOY—Before I do anything more, I say at once that I agree with you on the subject of religion, and will mention it no more.

My studies have made me argumentative, so I proceed at once to attack you on the subject of compensation. It is all to be found in Book vii. of *Progress and Poverty*, but nevertheless I give an analysis.

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You admit the right of every man to liberty. What does this mean? It means that every man is free to do with himself what he pleases, to work at what he likes, to get what he earns, and to do all this without permission of any one, provided that in so doing he does not interfere with equally undoubted rights of liberty in others. But a man cannot work unless he lives, and he cannot live unless on the earth.

Now suppose I am on the island of Arran, which belongs to the Duke of Hamilton. I have no boat, I cannot swim, and he has a prejudice against me. In consequence he denies me the right to live on the island. What is to happen? Like the amphibious animal, according to a celebrated definition, I can't live on land and I die in the water, and as a result I am driven to beg for his permission to exercise my natural right of existence. In other words I become his slave, and as Mr. George says—"The recognition of individual ownership of land is the denial of the natural rights of other individuals. In short, except by grace and favour of the landlords, private property in land involves slavery." Therefore it is wrong—a robbery. "Because I was robbed yesterday and the day before that, is it any reason I should suffer myself to be robbed to-day and to-morrow?" Of course not. Instead of complaining that they get no compensation now, the landowners ought to be only too glad that they are not made to refund what they have unjustly acquired in the past. The fact that the present owners are not the original thieves, that they have not considered themselves or been considered thieves, does not affect the question of justice, though it may

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excite compassion. If I steal your watch and pawn it to A for 10s., and spend the 10s., you can legally claim your watch from A, on proof of ownership, without refunding the 10s.

You are right in saying that the personal issue to myself does not blunt my sense of justice; and to prove it still further I will now fulfil my promise, and tell you how I propose to get over this difficulty of the landowners.

You remember, no doubt, in the beginning of the French Revolution how one night in the States General one estate after another voluntarily gave up exclusive privileges which were obviously incompatible with the rights of man. This surprising instance of generosity sprung from one example set by one of the estates, and such examples always do promote imitation.

Now, my dear George, here is my plan. I do not mean to turn out the landlords. I mean to make them turn out themselves. An example of generosity is needed. I will set that example. Now you see how glad I am to be a landowner. Were I not, I could not help forward this grand movement, because I should have nothing to surrender. I will now enter into details of my scheme. I had not thought them out when I wrote to you last. Now, however, they are complete, and I send you an abridgment.

As you know, I shall be twenty-one in a few weeks, and then I come in for a very large share of my father's estate near Whatchester—about 3000 acres. This land rents for £6000 a-year even at present, and has been known to rent for £9000. This is not the whole of the property, which consists of about 10,000 acres, bringing in in good years £30,000, and

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even at present some £25,000 annually. I do not come into this latter part till I am twenty-five, and in the meantime my guardian, Colonel Maitland, administers it for my benefit, as he has hitherto administered the 3000 acres into which I come in a few weeks. Hitherto I have lived on an allowance made out of the estate, while the rest of the proceeds has been invested in funds and other securities. But when I come into the 3000 acres my allowance ceases, and the whole of the rents (hateful term!) of the 7000 acres still in the hands of Colonel Maitland accumulate for four years—until, in fact, I am twenty-five—when I come into both land and accumulation, and shall be entitled to consider myself as one of the upper ten thousand.

The land is all in a ring fence—in fact a capital estate. The only pity is that I am in possession of it by robbery. Were it, or rather could it be, the proceeds of my own industry, there is nothing I should like better than to possess it. But as things are at present, I cannot possess that land. Every time I rode over it, I should feel that I was trampling down a woman, or crushing the life out of a little child. I cannot look upon my beautiful woods, because I feel that they are nourished where the food of indigent men should grow. If I go out shooting, each shot is lodged in a human bosom. If I go to hunt, I ride the horses of Diomed, fed on human flesh.

I am going to alter all this. I have consulted a solicitor in Oxford, and he informs me that nothing is more easy than to administer my property for the benefit of those on it. I can, as soon as I come into the various portions, execute a deed of trust, by which I transfer the rent of the land into the hands of a

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committee of management, with directions to employ it in the following manner:—

The fiscal burdens of England come under two heads—

IMPERIAL TAXATION.
LOCAL TAXATION.

Taking the latter first, the committee will simply arrange with the local authorities to supply the funds for their expenditure, not out of the rates as heretofore, but out of the rent of the land.

Imperial taxation comes under three heads—

I. LAND AND INCOME TAX.
II. STAMP DUTIES OF ALL SORTS AND CERTAIN MISCELLANEOUS SOURCES OF REVENUE.
III. INDIRECT TAXATION.

The land and income taxes are well known now, and it is easy to compound with the Government for them. This the committee will do, and hand over a lump sum yearly, out of the rent. With regard to stamp duties, I find I shall have no difficulty in arranging with the Government, in consideration of a fixed yearly payment, calculated on the average paid per head of population in the United Kingdom, to allow all persons on the estate the privilege of sending letters and telegrams free, and being further exempt from all other forms of stamp duties.

The abolition of indirect taxation is not so easy. A co-operative store will be established on the estate, within easy distance of all parts, and in connection with this will, if necessary, be auxiliary houses, such as public houses, bakeries, etc., etc., drawing all supplies

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from the central store, and retailing on the co-operative principle as it does.

I need not go into the question of co-operation, because you are already familiar with it, having dealt with the Civil Service while at Oxford. Well, my store will work on exactly the same lines, with this exception, that instead of selling the materials at cost price, and so evading middlemen's commissions, it will sell them at a lower price still—to wit, cost price, less the amount by which excise increases it.

Of course there will be a deficit every year, and that deficit will be met by devoting a portion of the rent to it. You will see that the effect of this device is to get rid of indirect taxation, so that every one on the estate will live absolutely tax free. This plan I invented myself, and I don't mind telling you, I am rather proud of it, because it enables me to realise my ideal without the delay of legislation.

It also pleases me because Mr. George himself, though holding co-operation as absolutely insufficient to reduce the general sum of poverty, nevertheless admits, that, to the first introducer, it must be a great benefit. Even if it were not, I should be more or less driven to it, because with private shopkeepers there would be a constant tendency to sell things at old prices, and pocket the amount represented by duty as shopkeepers' profit.

I believe that after all this is done there will be still a considerable surplus. This I mean to devote in the first place to paying the committee a small salary, and then to the establishment of baths, recreation grounds, free dinners, public libraries, and a home for the indigent and old. I shall also in this way be able to

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reduce the amount paid to paupers under the head of local taxation, and if I do I shall then have all the greater surplus. Believe me, George, when I think of all the advantages I can confer simply by this just distribution of wealth of which I am the fortuitous possessor, my eyes fill with tears. I begin to understand how much indeed life is worth living, and to wonder what I have done to deserve that such a glorious opportunity of promoting the happiness both of myself and others should fall to my lot instead of to any other of the thirty-five millions, more or less, who go to make up our nation.

The only thing which in the least mars my happiness is the fact that for four years I must apply my reforms only on thirty per cent. of my property; at least unless I can persuade Colonel Maitland to my views. However, so far as I can, I have determined to go. I have had the deed of transfer prepared; it shall be signed on the 24th of February, my birthday, and if Colonel Maitland makes me wait for four years, why, I must wait.

I have written to Colonel Maitland, giving him a sketch of the scheme just as I have given it to you; and while thanking him for his kindness in managing my affairs so long and so well, I have nevertheless, I think, conveyed to him that no opposition of his will prevent me doing what I think right with my own land.

I have urged him to allow me to apply all the rest in the same way during the four years I have yet to wait; but something tells me he will not consent. It is so difficult to change all the opinions of a lifetime, even in the face of the most absolute proof. Colonel

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Maitland is a kind, humane, just man; but if prejudice so warped even "such high-minded men as Mill and Buckle," how can I expect such a relinquishment of all his old habits of thought from Colonel Maitland?

No; for new ideas, I suppose, new people are needed; and it is for the young that is reserved the glorious task of regenerating the world. However, I do not yet despair of Colonel Maitland. I have sent him a copy of *Progress and Poverty*, which I have managed to obtain since I wrote to you, and am anxiously expecting his letter.

In the meantime, please send back my copy of the book at once. I find I have to refer to it every day. I forgot to mention that I shall stipulate in my transfer of the land that this book is to be the sole arbiter in all matters of dispute; that what it says must be done; for I consider it so complete and self-contained that I have no fear in founding the work of a lifetime upon it.

Oh, what a long letter! My head aches with the thought it has cost me, and yet I have put in only about a tenth of my scheme. Bambridge has just come in, and insists on my going down to the boats, and I think it the best thing that I can do. Write soon, and tell me what you think of my plan, and I will tell you what Colonel Maitland says.—I am, yours economically,

HENRY BROADBENT.

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LETTER IV.

HENRY BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

10*th January* 1882.

DEAR GEORGE—Many thanks for your letter. It came yesterday very opportunely, because I was able to set your approbation against the enclosed letter from Colonel Maitland. I told you I should expect it, but I must say I hoped to be disappointed. You see he does not even read the book. He pooh-poohs it as if all these books were the same; as if we were at the acme of perfection; as if there was no such thing as misery, and no necessity for improvement. Of course it does not alter my determination, but I must say it grieves my heart. Still you stand by me. No doubt you feel bound not to do anything to hurry me into what most people, I suppose, would consider an act of insanity; but I can read between the lines. I know your heart is with me, and be sure nothing shall make me either change or turn back.

I confess I am annoyed with Colonel Maitland, but I have written, I hope, a temperate letter to him, of which I send you a copy. After all, what good cause has not had to struggle with annoyance and depression?—Yours, as ever, HENRY BROADBENT.

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[*Copy.*]

Colonel MAITLAND, V.C., to H. BROADBENT, Esq.

9th January 1882.

MY DEAR BOY—When you have lived in this world as long as I have, you will know that the problems which perplex men are comparatively few, though the solutions are innumerable. One of the most general problems is, "Given life, to support it without work." I have not read Mr. George's book, because your letter shows me it is only another futile solution of this insoluble problem. I do not think you could seriously expect that I would consent to a scheme which involves the surrender of one of the finest properties in the world, so my refusal will not surprise you much. But I think my years, and the interest which you know I take in you, entitle me to ask you to listen to an old fellow's advice. It is, "Give up this foolish plan at once." Never mention that you ever entertained it, and rely on the applause and secrecy of—Your affectionate guardian, HUGH MAITLAND.

LETTER V.

HENRY BROADBENT, Esq., to Colonel MAITLAND, V.C.

10th January 1882.

MY DEAR SIR—I received your letter this morning, and confess it was a disappointment. I do not think

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you realise what a hold this revelation has upon me, nor, as you have not read the book, can you have any idea of the merits of the question. No doubt you can refuse to allow me to dispose of the greater part of my property at present; but I think it only right to inform you that when I come of age I shall sign the deed, of which I send you a copy, by which I make over the three thousand acres near Whatchester to trustees, to be employed for the benefit of the residents on the estate; and also bind myself to make a similar disposition of the rest of my property four years hence.

I hope you will take this intimation as it is meant, not as a bravado, but simply as an expression of my intention, of which I think it proper, in acknowledgment of your kindness and care for me, to give you early information. I shall be very sorry to lose your esteem and good opinion. I am afraid we must agree to differ, though still continuing to respect each other. I can understand that you have difficulty in freeing yourself from prejudices which have, so to speak, grown up with you: and I know that most men of your age will entirely agree with you. Still, if there were no work for young men to do, I do not believe they would have been created in such quantities.

The world has not yet forgotten a dare-devil exploit of a certain Captain Maitland, who climbed into an embrasure at Sebastopol, and slew five Russians with his own hand before he fell himself, covered with wounds. I do not suppose the world would expect the present Colonel Maitland to perform such a feat; but for all that, no one was sorry when the young captain got his V.C. Now, I believe this social

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problem is my fortress, which I must conquer or die in the attempt. I *must* set about it, even though it separates me from you, and all I can hope is that you will not refuse, so to speak, to shake hands with me before we part, and consider me, nevertheless—Your not ungrateful ward, HENRY BROADBENT.

LETTER VI.

Colonel MAITLAND, V.C., to H. BROADBENT, Esq.

19*th January* 1882.

MY DEAR BOY—Your last letter shows me that you are really in earnest, and though I am no more favourably disposed to your scheme, I thought it worth my while to inquire into it. I have therefore read *Progress and Poverty*, in the last few days; and I can understand how such a book might affect a young lad. Perhaps I have something of Captain Maitland left yet—who knows?

Now, Harry, I do not mean to pooh-pooh the book, but I must ask you to listen to one or two observations on it. If large rents amount to denying the greater part of the world the right to live, small rents will amount to the same denial, though to a smaller part of the world. But, as Mr. George says, all men have an equal right to live; and, therefore, I must conclude that an institution which denies anyone the right to live is as bad in theory as one that denies

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everyone the right to live. A rifle fired into a crowd will not do so much mischief as a cannon, but I think the man who fired either would deserve to be hung for murder.

Now I can't understand why Mr. George does not abolish all rents, if they are so iniquitous, and therefore I am driven to the conclusion that rent, as an institution is not iniquitous.

Very well. Rent is not iniquitous, but the payment of it to private persons is. This is what you are about to put to the test; and I think that if every theory of the kind were put to the same practical proof, many less of them would be in existence now. But surely this is not so organic a change as to be worth the sacrifice of a fortune, which you admit is pleasant to possess, if you thought it right. Now let us come to a compromise. If you once sign the deed of which you sent me a copy, you alienate for ever the property you devise, and may put it out of your power to direct the experiment; because it is possible that you may not be elected one of the trustees. I have absolute power, under your father's will, to dispose of the property as I think best for your benefit, and if I can prevent you from squandering a third of it I think I shall be doing excellent work.

So I make you this offer. If you will consent not to sign the deed, but to try the experiment for four years, directing it yourself, subject to some rules which I will draw up, but to which I think no sane man could object, but without making the power to thwart you over to anyone else, I, on my part, will allow you to try the experiment on the whole estate. When you are twenty-five you may, if still convinced

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of the justice of your scheme, devise the whole of the property as you mean to devise the third part of it now; while by this arrangement you will be able to try the experiment on a large scale, and will be all the better able to anticipate its success in the future. Besides, if this is really a great measure of justice, you will be able to try it out to all intents and purposes four years sooner than you otherwise could, and all I ask is, that you will wait four years before hopelessly committing yourself to the alienation of your property.

Let us clearly see what we are going to prove. It is, "Is it better to pay rents to the State than to private persons?" and it is not, "Are rents just or unjust?" You must not forget that in all past ages the answer has been in favour of allowing private persons to collect rents; and though I do not say you may not have improved on the practice of your ancestors, still I do not think I am asking anything unreasonable in requesting you to experiment four years before you reject the experience of centuries, especially when I offer to assist the experiment by so great a concession. I think you will see I am acting for your good; and in answer to your remark that young men have work to do in this world, let me suggest that old men may not be without their functions, and perhaps one of them is the restraint they impose on the impetuosity of young ones.

Now good-bye, my dear boy. You have put me in mind of my school days, when I used to write essays. But if I succeed in persuading you to accept my offer, I shall think my style has much improved.—I am, yours sincerely, HUGH MAITLAND.

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LETTER VII.

HENRY BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

20th January 1882.

DEAR GEORGE—The enclosed from Colonel Maitland arrived to-day. I am very sorry I have put the poor old gentleman to the trouble of reading *Progress and Poverty*, and yet I am glad he has. I am not quite sure whether I should accept his offer. To tell you the truth, it seems a little contemptuous, and yet, if it were not for that, it meets my views better than I could have hoped. But to make myself sole administrator of this scheme implies a distrust in human nature which I should not like to be supposed to entertain; and not to commit myself implies a still more humiliating distrust in the scheme itself.

There is something rather strong in Colonel Maitland's argument that rent in itself is not unjust.

What do you think? In this case I would be guided by your advice. But I do not forget that when Cæsar made his resolve he burnt his boats.—I am, yours sincerely, H. BROADBENT.

LETTER VIII.

The Rev. G. MASTERMAN to H. BROADBENT, Esq.

21st January 1882.

MY DEAR HARRY—I think no one could quarrel with Colonel Maitland's offer: it is very reasonable.

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What does it matter if he distrusts human nature? You don't. Since your scheme has not yet been published, it cannot suffer from a change of place. It is true that Cæsar burnt his boats, but it was to fortify his followers, not himself. As to what you call the humiliation to yourself, I cannot see that that should weigh with you. If the scheme is just, it is no worse because Colonel Maitland thinks slightingly of it. Besides, there is no doubt his arguments are very forcible; and even if his inference is incorrect, he offers you such facilities that I should consider you false to your own faith to refuse them. Remember he does not in the least prejudice your power to dispose of the estate four years hence, and he does give you the power to dispose of it now.

I still think you are right, but I have no doubt that not to accept this offer would be the height of folly; nor do I hesitate to say, that if you fail to accept it, your reputation for common sense will fall in my opinion.—I am, your sincere friend,

G. MASTERMAN.

LETTER IX.

HENRY BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

26th February 1882.

MY DEAR GEORGE—Well! it is over; and I think I may say that, both politically and socially, I have had a great success. From yesterday we begin our experiments, and, you will no doubt agree with me, a

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new state of things. I think it was very shabby of you not to come, but I cannot take so severe a revenge as to refuse to describe the proceedings.

I was awakened on the morning of the twenty-fourth by a brass band, a shouting crowd, and a deputation of tenants—all assembled to do me honour. The band played "Johnnie comes marching home again," "He's a jolly good fellow," and "Auld lang syne," in quick and inharmonious succession. The crowd cheered, and ate and drank at my expense; while the deputation ate at my expense, and presented an address at their own. Having thanked them suitably and had breakfast, I went to the tent where we were to dine, and then retired with a copy of *Progress and Poverty*, and a considerable sense of fear, to put the finishing touches to my speech. I happened to pass through the old house, which is being converted into a hospital and public baths, and was much pleased to see how fast it had progressed. The front of the house, commanding a view of the public park into which the grass lands and gardens have been turned, is to be the hospital for uninfectious complaints. The stables are the fever hospital, and the servants' offices have been turned into bath-rooms, all done out in white and blue tiles, the very model of cleanliness. Sparing you the agonies of speeeh-composing, I pass on to the banquet Everybody on the estate came—3330 people—except a few babies in arms, who could neither be expected to care for Progress nor to fear Poverty.

The tent was semi-circular, so that when I spoke I had my face to all the people, and all could hear. I read my speech and issued printed copies, of which I send you one, and you must tell me what you think

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of it. I hope I did not say too much about myself, and that I did say enough about Mr. George. I have marked the speech where the applause came in, but nothing can express the enthusiasm that greeted me at the end. The men cheered, the women waved scarves, the children shouted, until I began to think that I had taken my armour off instead of merely announcing my intention to buckle it on. But far the most touching thing of the whole evening was the reply of Mr. Priestly, the oldest and largest farmer on the estate. He began by saying he had known the family long. He praised my grandfather and father, and said he felt sure that if they had done wrong they did not know it. Then he launched out in praise of me, which I really cannot repeat, and ended with a most pathetic appeal to the assembly to support me in my good intentions.

There were loud shouts of "We will! we will!" and I was so much affected that if I had not been able to assume an idiotic grin, I declare I believe I should have burst into tears. When I began this letter I meant it to be a long one; but people are crowding in for orders about stores, hospitals, stables, and taxes, till I am nearly beside myself. So good-bye! Of course you shall hear when anything of moment occurs, but don't expect long letters in future from—

Yours sincerely, H. BROADBENT.

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A Speech delivered by Mr. BROADBENT, *24th Feb.* 1882.

Ladies and Gentlemen—When a large meeting like this concurs in wishing a young man like me success and prosperity in his future career, I consider they lay a heavy responsibility upon him. They acknowledge that from some accident, of birth or otherwise, his conduct has become of moment to them; that they are willing to accept the position, and that it is for him to justify their confidence. If I am right in putting this interpretation on the speech I have just heard from Mr. Wellman (the steward on the estate), I reply that I accept both your good wishes and your challenge—that I desire to do all I can for your benefit, and beg that to the best of your abilities you will help me. (Cheers.) I am very glad to hear that you assent. I consider from this moment there exists a compact between us; and without further prelude I proceed to tell you what I think is my duty to you. (Hear, hear.) In the course of my reading at Oxford, I have met with a book which seems to me to state the proper relations of the various classes of society to one another, in a manner as novel as it is obviously just. Of this book I have procured several copies, and I recommend it to your study, because upon this I hope to found a new society, of which you and I shall be parts. (Cheers.) The book is called *Progress and Poverty*, by Mr. Henry George, an American. You will read it for yourselves; but I may say the main point is this. You all know how the rents of land tend to rise, and I believe there is no country where they are higher than in England. (A voice: "True for you.") Mr. George discovers that where

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rents are highest, pauperism is most prevalent. I will show you how he connects them. The reason that land in England is more valuable than in Central Africa (both being supposed equally fertile) is that various causes, such as the security of a settled form of government, the enterprise of the English people, and the proximity of markets, permit, from the same amount of land and labour, a greater return in England than in Africa. That is—Suppose I have a garden in which 200 cabbages will grow, and you have one in which 100 cabbages will grow, and it takes the same amount of digging to produce both crops. Then you can afford to give me 100 cabbages in the form of rent, and be no worse off than if you took the whole produce of an inferior garden. Or suppose you could go to Africa, and produce as many cabbages as I can here, but in order to sell them had to send them to London at a cost equal to half the price of a cabbage; then you could afford to pay me rent as before, and yet be no worse off than if you had gone to Africa. Now, what has made my land in this case better than yours? It grows no more cabbages, it takes no less labour. You do not pay for superior land. You pay because my land is nearer to London than yours. (Hear, hear.) I did not build London; neither did you; but I see no reason why I should gain for something I have not done. Evidently, therefore, we must find out who did build London, and pay him. (A voice: In course, that's it.) London was built because it was in a favourable position on a river; because the prosperity of the people was assured by good government; because the British nation is the most sensible in the world. (Roars of applause.) Who

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should reap the benefit of all these? The advantages of site is a free gift from the Giver of all good. We need not pay for that. Good government is the work of the state. The sense of the British nation is the heritage of the whole of it. In short, the prosperity of my land is due to the state; and to the state the reward is due. Of course the state is not a capitalist; it only exists for the good of all; and therefore, beyond what is necessary for the government of the people, the rise in the value of land is their due. (Applause.)

Gentlemen, you have as good a right to this estate as I. We all came into the world with nothing; I as well as you. We are debtors for mere existence to the generosity of our parents, I as well as you. God gave us life and bade us live, you as well as me; and if I withhold from you the land on which our joint Creator ordained that we should live, I shut you out from a beneficence that is your heritage as well as mine. I have resolved to be no longer a party to this state of things. I hope from to-day to found, as far as in me lies, a little commonwealth based on principles of purer justice than has hitherto existed; and I propose to take advantage of your presence here to-day to unfold my plan at length. I am nominally the owner of 10,000 acres of land which bring me in a rental of £25,000 a-year. The people who live on these 10,000 acres number 3330 persons, about one man to each three acres. If these people did not pay rent, each man would be £7, 11s. 6d. richer annually.

Gentlemen, I mean to make you a present of this wealth. You shall live here tax free, rate free, duty free; and besides, you shall each receive an aliquot proportion of the surplus representing your reward, as

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integral components of the state, for the benefit you confer on the land on which you live. No more poverty! No more crime! Vice and misery are to be unknown; and we shall found a model of a true and virtuous government! Now let me trouble you with a few figures. I do not expect you to carry them away in your heads, so I have caused copies of this speech to be printed, and each of you shall receive one on leaving. But to the figures.

I find that, taking the average of the United Kingdom, taxes to the following extent are paid—

I. Imperial Taxation, amounting per head population	£2 10 6
II. Local Taxation	1 15 10
Total . . .	£4 6 4

I will deal with the latter item first. I have arranged with the local authorities to abolish the present methods of raising money by taxes, and I will set aside annually £6000 to meet the cost of the various institutions. A great deal of this sum should go to the maintenance of paupers, but as I hope to abolish this class the saving will be returned for division among the population.

Now as to Imperial Taxation. I put it under three heads—I. Direct Taxation. II. Stamp Duties and Miscellaneous. III. Indirect Taxation.

I. Direct Taxes on Land, House and Income Tax. I have compounded with the Government to pay a fixed sum in satisfaction of these, amount	£1400 0 0

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II. I have made a similar arrangement with regard to Stamps, each inhabitant by simply posting a letter, or writing a telegram, will be entitled to have it sent anywhere. In the same way all deeds executed on the estate will be stamped free of cost, and all succession duties will be defrayed by the estate. The cost will be £2600 0 0

III. The third item is much more difficult to manage, but I flatter myself I have hit upon a most satisfactory solution of the problem. I discover that the population of the United Kingdom pays to Government twenty-seven shillings and fourpence per head under the name of Excise and Customs. I need not dilate on the iniquity of this tax. It taxes the food of the poor man and renders the cost of living greater. Therefore there is no form of taxation which should be sooner abolished. To illustrate the exorbitance of this tax, let me ask you to listen to these figures. You know the whole amount is 27s. 4d. per head. This is how it is imposed :—

Articles of Food.	Consumption per head of population.	Cost untaxed. s.	d.	Amount of tax. s.	d.
Cocoa . .	·34 lbs.	0	3	0	0·34
Coffee . .	·88 lbs.	1	0·32	0	1·76
Currants . .	4·32 lbs.	0	9·72	0	3·24
Tea . .	4·67 lbs.	4	3·46	2	4·22
Tobacco . .	1·42 lbs.	1	0	5	8-16
Wine . .	·41 gals.	0	10	0	9·84
Spirits . .	1·31 gals.	4	0·30	13	6·60
Beer . .	27·80 gals.	23	2·00	4	6·44
	Total - -	35	4·80	27	4·00

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Thus each of you spend 63s. annually in these things, and of that 27s. is taxation. In other words, you could get nearly twice as much for your money if there were no taxes.

Now we cannot abolish taxes, because we live in the midst of an enlightened country which imposes them. But I can certainly prevent you from paying them; and this is how I mean to do it. You know the co-operative store which already exists in Bliston. I have made an arrangement to take this over, and use it as a central wholesale house. Everything consumed on the estate shall be bought by the committee of management exactly as at present, and sold, either at the present store, or at some other convenient place on the estate. The selling price will not only be bare cost price after deducting the expenses of the store as at present; but the cost of taxation will also be deducted, and you shall buy your goods as you would have bought them if England did not rob the working man to protect the rich. The loss on this transaction shall be made up out of the rent.

There are 3330 people on the estate. Each one, as I have shown, pays 27s. 4d. annually in indirect taxation, so the cost of the charge will be £4545, 19s.

So that to put a balance sheet before you we have—

To Revenue	£25,000	*By* Local Taxation ...	£6000
		,, Land & Income Tax	1400
		,, Stamps, etc.....	2600
		,, Indirect Taxation...	4550
		,, Fees of Government	500
			£15,050
		By Balance	9950
	£25,000		£25,000

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Thus you see we have £10,000 to divide annually among the inhabitants on the estate.

You will notice I have put down £500 for fees of government. This will be my salary for managing the estate. But I do not mean to make myself a despot. The whole estate does not at present belong to me, because I do not come into the greater part of it till I am twenty-five. But I have arranged with my guardian, Colonel Maitland, that this measure of justice shall not be postponed for four years if I accept the following conditions:—

I. I have to be head of the government for four years.

II. There is to be a weekly meeting in Bliston school-room to debate measures of government. There shall be twelve delegates elected by vote of the population on the estate. Men and women shall be alike eligible to vote or to sit in the assembly after they have attained the age of twenty-one. There is no property qualification for either voters or delegates.

III. I am to have the right to veto any measure passed by the assembly, and to dissolve it.

IV. Either I or the assembly may appeal to the body of the people for a vote on any special subject. This vote will bind the assembly, but does not prevail against my right of veto.

V. The redemption of taxation is to be the first consideration, and no application of funds can be made to any purpose till this claim is satisfied.

VI. No departure from any of these conditions can take place without the consent of Colonel Maitland.

VII. We are to make no restraint of the liberty of any one in excess of the existing law of the country.

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VIII. We hereby agree to carry out to the letter the advice contained in *Progress and Poverty*, and in all difficulty to refer to that book.

I do not think these are hard conditions; but I wish I could have made over the land now as I propose to do at the end of the four years. Colonel Maitland exacted a promise from me, as a condition of his concession, that I should not bind myself to the alienation of any part of my property till I am twenty-five. But I think I may tell you my intentions.

I intend to place all the land by deed in the hands of trustees, who shall administer it for the benefit of the people on the estate. These trustees are to be selected for the first year by myself. One shall retire each succeeding year in rotation, and the places will then be filled by vote of the population. The decisions of the trustees shall be subject to reversal by vote of the population. This, in my mind, would secure absolutely good government; nevertheless, I see nothing in Colonel Maitland's regulations which should prevent good government during the four years that they last. There is only one part of the regulations to which I take exception, and that is the proviso that no restraint of liberty in excess of the existing law is to take place.

Gentlemen, I must say I think this might have been omitted, rather because it seems to convey a slight than because it will ever be a restraint on our actions. The motive of all this change has been to render liberty more universal than it is at present—to throw the resources of the earth open to the poorest inhabitant—to welcome all comers as guests to this our "banquet continually spread." "Just as the passenger in a rail-

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way car may spread himself and his luggage over as many seats as he pleases until other passengers come in, so may a settler take as much land as he chooses until it is needed by others, when his right must be curtailed by the equal right of others." These, gentlemen, are Mr. George's own words, and they must be our guide. This land was made for all, and all shall have their place in it; and if we are to make such regulations as this rule forbids, we but erect a monopoly in the place of one we abolish.

No, the key-note of our music of the future is this great and fundamental fact: There is room for all God's people on God's earth, and want and misery spring up only when one section of His creatures deny their portion of His benefits to the rest.

This fact we shall seize and act upon, and it shall be my greatest pleasure, as I know it will be yours, to look forward to the day when, having perfected this scheme, we can send an invitation to the great man who first suggested this idea to us, to visit at least one spot on the earth where his theories have taken root and brought forth fruit of happiness and justice.

The first business of the assembly will be to decide on the amount to be devoted out of the surplus of £10,000 to the maintenance of public baths, the hospital, and other institutions, the schemes of which I shall lay before you, and for which the buildings are nearly complete.

In order that the co-operative store may start from this day, I have bought the present stock-in-trade, and given a mortgage on the whole of the revenue, less the compositions due to the government, as a security to the various merchants for the supply of the coming

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half-year. A tariff of prices shall be hung up in the shop, so that every one may see at what price things are to be sold, and the same tariff will hold in all the grocers' shops and public-houses on the estate.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is my plan. I do not say it is perfect. I rely upon your advice, given through your delegates, to make it so. But this I think I can say, that I believe I have set my foot on the neck of a huge injustice, which has been sucking the life out of thousands of my fellow-countrymen. I take no credit to myself for abolishing this pest, because to suppose that any of you in my position could have known of and yet not abolished it, would be to insult you by supposing that some of you are villains. But this I can say, I am attempting in your interest, and, as some would say, against my own, to render justice and to make the good prevail. I am young and inexperienced. I have only the goodness of my cause to help me. I do not fear my task, but I know that you can lighten it; and, standing here among you, I earnestly appeal for that help, trust, and sympathy, which can turn my toil into a pleasure.

LETTER X.

H. BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN,

30*th March* 1882.

MY DEAR GEORGE—The elections are over, and the assembly has met and held four sittings. I write to give an account of the measures passed and other doings on the estate.

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The number of members is twelve, and two are ladies. One is Mrs. Barrett, wife of a man who, I think, is likely to become leader of the house, and the other is Miss Beldon. I don't know why this latter was elected. She is about twenty-three, very pretty, and a great favourite with most of the young men; in fact, I think their vote carried her in, and she herself says that she never intended to stand, but some one put her name up for a lark. However, she is going to be a firm supporter of the government, I can see, and is hugely enamoured of my scheme, though perhaps I may have to be careful that my friends don't ruin me. Her father is hind to one of the farmers. The most prominent of the men are Mr. Barrett and Mr. Paisley. Mr. Barrett is a true type of the advanced working man. He has seen many men and cities, and was familiar with *Progress and Poverty* and many other such works even before I was. He was born on the estate, where his father was a poor labourer, and left it in early life to go to Birmingham, where he worked as a mechanic. He is carpenter, engineer, bricklayer, mason—everything in short. When steam ploughs and reaping machines came in there was an opening for such a man here; and he came back, bringing with him Mrs. Barrett, who is the daughter of an Irishman who settled as an operative in Birmingham. Both Mr. and Mrs. Barrett have strong views on the subject of Ireland, and I am glad that the government of that unfortunate country does not come within the sphere of practical politics here. Mr. Barrett thinks that labour is absurdly underpaid; that the British Empire is being sapped by the expense of maintaining the Royal Family; that there

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is something in Bradlaugh; that the House of Lords should be abolished "right off"; and that members of Parliament should be paid by the state, to enable working men to send more representatives. If he had his way he would enact that no Parliament should be complete without so many *bona fide* working men in it. I think he and I shall agree on all matters of which *Progress and Poverty* treats, except that he is somewhat Malthusian in his opinions on the population question.

I regret that Mrs. Barrett also holds pronounced views on this question. On married women's property, the divorce law, and the contagious diseases acts, she is also well but somewhat unpleasantly informed; and has a habit of importing her opinions on these subjects into every debate, just as, I believe it was Cato, but I have not time to look him up, used to end up his speeches with *Carthage est delenda*. In other respects I think she says ditto to Mr. Barrett. When Mrs. Barrett speaks I usually blush, and Miss Beldon says "Oh lor!"

Mr. Paisley, I may say at once, is not an attractive man. He is tall, thin, and stooping, with a tendency, I think, to consumption. He has a protruding forehead, fierce, hard, little eyes, an inferior complexion, and a small thin-lipped mouth, surrounded by a scanty black beard and moustache. I believe he knows *Progress and Poverty* by heart, and he is an ardent disciple. I am sorry, however, to say that he seems to hail it less as a device for making the poor richer than for making the rich poorer. To have ever been richer than Paisley is to earn his hatred. To have ever been poorer is to earn his contempt. He is essentially

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suspicious, and has an unpleasant way of always showing that he is so. On the other hand, he is a good speaker, much less biassed by prejudice than the majority of the other members, and he very often comes out with suggestions that show an acute and far-seeing mind.

At present I am not inclined to like him so well as Mr. Barrett, because he seems to think that there is something behind all this measure of reform. When I ask a question he gives me a quick look, as if he thought he had caught me at last, and answers in a guarded way, as if he feared to tell me what I might some day use against him. It may be that he does not like the postponement of the definite step for four years. But what could I do? About the other members I know very little as yet, but I will describe them more fully in some future letter.

The first duty of the Assembly was to decide on the disposition of the surplus of £10,000, which you will remember the estimate of expenditure given in my speech revealed. I had four preliminary ideas. They were a fund for public baths, a free library and museum, a public hospital, and an art school.

I estimated the cost of these as follows:—

Baths . . .	£700
Library and Museum	300
Art School . .	300
Hospital . . .	1500
	£2,800

We took the art school first. I explained it was to teach music, painting, fine needlework, and singing.

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There were to be free lectures so many days a week, and private tuition at a merely nominal cost. Miss Beldon spoke in favour of the scheme at once, much to my delight; but I am sorry to say she was the only supporter. The others objected to the expenditure; they said they would never listen to the lectures; that anyone could sing who wished to do so without being taught; that we had plenty of painters about the place now. In short, I saw they were determined not to have it, so I prudently withdrew the scheme before provoking a contest.

On the library and museum question Mr. Paisley was in favour of the scheme, but he was promptly put down by Mrs. Barrett. She said that if Mr. Paisley wished to read, he could buy his own books, as she and her husband had done. She then enumerated ten or twelve books, which she remarked were all one needed to read, and showed that in cheap editions they could be procured for seven shillings and sixpence. She further estimated that the grant came to two shillings per head per annum, and hastily assuming that only half the population read anything, showed that this grant amounted to supplying half the stock of human knowledge each year, so that in the third year repetition became inevitable. To this she did not in itself object; but contended that as long as certain abuses connected with her pet topics of politics continued to exist, it was a crying shame to spend money on books. I combated this speech as well as I could, and supported Mr. Paisley, ending with an appeal to Miss Beldon, who had seemed to me in favour of education. However, I am sorry to say she cared nothing for books, and the rest of the Assembly

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coinciding with either her or Mrs. Barrett, the motion was lost. The next question was that of baths. I could soon see that no one really wanted them, and few cared to conceal it; still, as I had made the baths, and was evidently very strongly in favour of them, they agreed that we should try them for a fortnight, and if ten per cent. of the people had been to them once a-week, they were to be maintained; if not, abolished. To this I consented, and am sorry to say that no one but myself has been to the baths, and so, to my great disappointment, the scheme is lost. Still, as Mr. Pelton, another member, remarked, you can bring a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink; and it's the same way with baths.

All the previous matters were easily settled, but the hospital threatened to become a burning question. The baths had been disposed of some days before, and I soon saw that the Assembly thought the way was cleared for strong measures. I brought forward the scheme of the hospital, showed that £1500 was very little to secure the services of a competent medical man, to whom I proposed to pay £500 a-year, while the remaining £1000 went to provide food and medicines for the inmates. I pointed out that all dwellers on the estate would be eligible either as in or out-patients, that medicines would be supplied gratis, and that in case of an epidemic we should have an absolute claim on the services of our medical man.

No one made any sign while I was speaking: but the moment I sat down Mr. Barrett rose and moved as an amendment, "That the fairest way to dispose of the surplus of £10,000 is to divide it equally among the inhabitants at the rate of £3 per head; that this

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become law; and that the payments be made half-yearly, at the rate of thirty shillings per head."

He said he was glad the other schemes had fallen on their own merits, because he thought this scheme of a hospital was the most unfair of all, and he could thus attack it singly. In the first place, he said, most people on the estate were either herbalists, homeopathists, or patronised a bone-setter in a neighbouring village. He contended that this measure either cast a slight upon treatments in which many believed, or worked the ruin of an enterprising practitioner. He also objected that it made the healthy pay for the cure of the sick, that it encouraged bad health, which he seemed to consider a form of imposture, and, moreover, established a sinecure on the estate which he was inclined to suspect was an intentional job of my own. He remarked that by dividing the surplus equally per head the fairest possible distribution was made, because the large families got most and the single people least, and so a man was encouraged to rear citizens. He pointed out that this was also in accordance with *Progress and Poverty:* and though I knew it was not his own view, I could not help admitting the truth of his statement. He further argued that what we had to abolish was poverty, from which the greater part of sickness sprung, while it was only fair that those who were ill should pay for their own cure. "For," said he, "if we pension the sick, why not pension the maimed, and so put a premium on wooden legs, and make a weekly allowance to the short-sighted?" He concluded by moving his amendment. The rest of the Assembly seemed to think that Mr. Barrett had struck the right nail on the head, but

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I rose and strongly pleaded the cause of the hospital. I need not repeat the arguments to you, a clergyman of the Church of England. I regret they had no weight with the Assembly, who not only voted the amendment with cheers, but rejected my proposal unanimously.

I thought this was too much, so I vetoed the amendment, and referred the question to a plebiscite. The result was most decisive in favour of the Assembly; so I have had to give in with the best grace I could, and leave both my baths and hospital useless.

I am sure you will sympathise with my disappointment, but I have been thinking over the whole question, and it may be that the Assembly is right. It is easy enough to found hospitals when you have plenty to eat, but when you see them maintained at the price of your own food and clothing, no doubt the prospect is not so pleasant.

So, with the best grace I could, I acquiesced in the views of the people, and we have agreed to distribute the surplus rateably among the population.

I foresee the next thing calling for attention will be the Co-operative Store; but it is getting so late, and I have so much to do to-morrow, that I must stop now. Please write and tell me what you think of my conduct, and believe me, your affectionate friend,

H. BROADBENT.

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LETTER XI.

The Rev. G. MASTERMAN to H. BROADBENT, Esq.

2nd April 1882.

MY DEAR HARRY—I received your letter the day before yesterday, and have been thinking over it ever since. I do not blame the Assembly for their views, because I think they are extremely natural If we put ourselves in the position of those people, and were asked whether we had rather have a fixed income, however small, and spend it ourselves, or even a larger income spent for us, and doled out in kind as it were, I believe we should prefer the former course. No doubt when you have no alternative, but must take the latter or nothing, as is the case where a man devotes his private property to any specific purpose, the state of affairs is entirely altered. But you have given these people their choice, and, having a choice, I do not think their decision unnatural. I find it an excellent rule when I am perplexed by the opinions of some of my parishioners, to try and imagine myself in their position, and often it helps me to understand things which have before seemed quite inexplicable.

You see we pride ourselves in England on our independence, and I believe very justly, because it is a most important part of the national character. But to see any one interfering in our private concerns, arranging our baths, prescribing our doctors, or deciding what we shall read, strikes a blow at that independence; and I know that the poorer classes regard such institutions as hospitals, museums, etc., half as a blessing, and the other half, perhaps, as an

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insult. It is the same spirit that makes the workhouse so distasteful that a man will often rather starve outside it than live in it.

I think Mr. George must have foreseen this also, for he is throughout his book rather vague as to the manner in which the surplus should be disposed of; and no doubt he did not wish to swaddle his infant too closely. Of course he knew there would be a surplus, because he says so in Book VIII., Chap. 2, of *Progress and Poverty*,

So I advise you to regard the action of your Assembly as a sign of health in the state. I was much interested in your description of the members, but advise you to be careful of Mr. Paisley. I should like to attend a sitting of the House some night. I suppose you can give me a ticket for the Speaker's gallery?

I look forward to hearing how the store works. If I send you an order will you execute it? Ready money of course. I wish I could have come to see you, but we have an epidemic of cholera here which keeps me fully employed. Nevertheless I shall rush over to you during my holidays.—Yours very sincerely,

G. MASTERMAN.

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LETTER XII.

H. BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

1*st May* 1882.

MY DEAR GEORGE.—You have so often given me good advice in my difficulties that I am now going to submit to you a real social problem, and to do so I must make some revelations which I have kept to myself for two months, and would gladly do so still. You remember, of course, that the store opened its doors on the 25th of February, and since then things have been sold at the reduced tariff. As that was the day after my birthday, of course every one was much excited at the new state of things, and, probably out of pure good nature, they crowded in to buy at the store with their week's wages. Naturally they sought to make the best bargains they could, and the item on which the most reduction was made was, of course, the most popular.

The particular item was whisky, and several people discovered that the same expenditure would produce about four times the usual quantity. They had the money, and did not think of saving on such a festive day; so they treated their friends. The friends returned the compliment, and I find from returns that, instead of a quarter of the money being spent, four times the amount of whisky was bought. You can imagine the result. The bar-keepers refused to supply the intoxicated men, but this did not stop the consumption, for many who were sober bought gallons of whisky and took them outside, and the result was that the village green was the scene of the most fearful orgie

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that the policeman ever remembers. The efforts of the police were quite useless. The rioters joined together and repulsed them. They barricaded the roads into the village, armed themselves with branches of trees, and bid defiance to the civil power.

The police were just about to telegraph for reinforcements, and the women and children were crowding round me weeping, and, I am sorry to say, much inclined to blame me, when some *bel esprit* on the green proposed that the whole assembly should go and give me three cheers as the author of this jollification.

Every one consented: a few members of the band were hastily assembled, and away they all marched to my house. I was only too glad to get them out of Bliston, where they were talking of lighting watchfires with the furniture of the cottages; so I met them at my door, had to shake hands with them all and listen to their hideous music, and finally allow them to go to sleep on the road outside. Fortunately a sleeting rain drove them home during the night.

This was not very encouraging, but I am glad to say no such scene has occurred since. There is still too much drunkenness, but the police can cope with it well enough. Nevertheless all this has naturally alarmed me, and my fears have been confirmed in a rather underhand manner.

It appears that Miss Beldon's aunt keeps the post office in Bliston, and one of the greatest pleasures of her niece in her leisure moments is to sort over the letter box, infer the origin and destination of the sealed letters, and acquaint herself with all that is written on post cards.

Since the freeing of the post office sealed letters have

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become more fashionable, but some one seems to have had a stock of cards and to have used them up. The diminution in the number of cards naturally brought a greater proportion of them under Miss Beldon's eye, and she showed me one of several of a similar tenour. It ran thus:—

"DEAR BILL,

"You can get Wiskey, 1s. a bottle.
Baccy 10d. a lb.
Beer 1d. per pint.
Smoke all day and drunk at night, 1s. 6d.
"Come on Saturday,
"JOE NATTRASS."

This made me think, and I gave orders that the accounts of the store should be brought to me for the two months ending 28th April. We had had little to buy, but the stocks were very low—too low in fact. I soon found that we had used far in excess of my estimate. Every man, woman, and child on the estate seems during the past two months to have drunk—

¾ gallons of spirits.
16 „ of beer; and to have smoked or chewed
13 ozs. of tobacco.

Other things have been consumed in proportion.

In short, if this goes on, we shall spend this year, instead of £4550 in indirect taxation, £18,000. There will then be no surplus, and all the debates in the Assembly on the disposal of it go for nothing. I am very thankful they did not sanction the Baths and Hospital.

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The moment I found this out I went to the Assembly and put the case to them. There was great consternation. At length Mr. Paisley spoke. He suggested that the storekeepers should be discharged or impeached in some way. This did not mend matters, for a scrutiny of the books proves that they have been most exactly kept, and there seems to have been scrupulous honesty in all the departments. However, the scrutiny showed that several people not on the estate had been dealing at the store, and among others was your name for the small order you gave in April. I need not say that Mr. Paisley gave me a very queer look when this came out. At last we agreed that there had been no fraud, and we came to the consideration of the remedies.

Mr. Pelton wished to exile any one who bought more than a specified quantity of anything per month. This seemed severe: besides, Mr. Smith said he was a teetotaller, and drank tea and coffee, and he would naturally consume more of these articles than Mr. Pelton, who, he insinuated, drank whatever he could get, and whose indulgence was much more expensive to the State than his (Mr. Smith's).

Mr. Dixon, another member, suggested that tickets should be issued to inhabitants, and strangers should be obliged to pay full price. I pointed out that this was entirely contrary to the teaching of *Progress and Poverty*, by which there were no such things as strangers, because the land ought to be free to all, and what he called strangers were really people who had as good a right to be on the land as he had. To this Mr. Paisley assented.

Mr. O'Brien, a bellicose Irishman, whose father is

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a sergeant in the army, suggested that, for that matter, there was no reason why England should belong to Englishmen rather than to Frenchmen, except the very excellent one, that the latter had never been able to get it. He attributed this to our standing army, and suggested that a few stout fellows with shillelaghs should patrol the country, and knock down any one they met who had no business in it. There could be no doubt that this infringed rule seven of the Constitution, that there should be no restraint of liberty in excess of the existing law. Nevertheless, it was not very untrue, and it struck the Assembly as exceedingly forcible.

Mrs. Barret then rose, and said the whole difficulty rose from excess of population. She said four of her neighbours had had children within the last two months, and one of them twins, and seemed to insinuate that each of these infants had drunk three quarters of a gallon of spirits, and consumed thirteen ounces of tobacco, since their birth. She then entered into some details of Mrs. Besant's preventive checks, but desisted at my earnest entreaty, promising to send me a copy of the book on the subject that I might read for myself.

Mr. Barrett made what seems the best suggestion yet. I need hardly say he had applauded his wife's speech. He said it was no use attempting to supply the whole of England tax-free, because that would require the revenue of the whole of the land of England. But we might do it to the extent of the land we had, and that was to do as I had done, and assume the consumption on this estate at the rate of that of the rest of England, and issue exactly that amount of

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commodities tax-free and no more. This would restrict the amount expended under that head to a fixed sum, and leave the surplus intact. He did not propose to incur such an expenditure all at once, but to let specified quantities of each of the articles be sold weekly, beginning on Monday and stopping as soon as all was sold. Then, for the rest of the week, things would be sold at ordinary prices.

He held that the standing army and ticket schemes were contrary to the liberty of the subject, and if they were not, would be ineffectual if the inhabitants consumed more than the usual quantity. But if they went on the principle of first-come first-served, he held that no one could complain.

Miss Beldon said it was all that beastly whisky and tobacco. They were what cost the State the money, and not the tea and coffee. Let them put higher taxes on these, and apply the proceeds to freeing more tea and coffee. Ever since this store had started, she said, the place had not been fit to live in. All the young men who used to be so pleasant and polite had become drunken, swearing, idling sots, and it was all the drink they got so cheap. She then appealed to all the Assembly about one Jack Tomlinson. She said they all knew what a fine, handsome, agreeable lad he had been. What was he now? He was idle, dissipated, and ugly; and she had that morning heard he had taken up with Betsy Pringle.

Here a flood of tears interrupted her speech, and some one near me remarked that Jack was not so bad a fellow after all, though he took his glass more frequently. He had been a lover of Miss Beldon's, but had not liked her general popularity; and now that she had lost him, no doubt she was sorry.

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I comforted Miss Beldon as well as I could, and told her not to lose heart, for which she blessed me, and said I was a kind soul. Then we proceeded to discuss her scheme. I saw that Mr. Pelton did not like it, but it was rather an invidious thing to combat it openly, because it might be supposed that the speaker liked his liquor too well. So I soon discovered that, as usual in delicate matters, the Assembly did not talk but meant to vote pretty straight. Therefore, out of consideration to Miss Beldon, whose tears were still flowing, I proposed that, without taking any step at present, we should adjourn the debate for a week. This motion was adopted, and now I want your advice.

All of these schemes seem to have something in them, and all are in some respects objectionable. You see, abolishing indirect-taxes on a small area attracts all the neighbours to share the good things. Yet even if it were done all over England, I see no reason why we should not have a rush of foreigners into the country, which would increase the cost of government, and so diminish the surplus to be divided among the people, for, of course, you could not make more land.

It may be that the store will not work; but I am loth to abandon it, because the scheme is essentially for the abolition of taxation, and I don't see any means of abolishing indirect taxes except my store.

Perhaps your letter may throw some light on the question, and then I shall be able to flourish your suggestion in Mr. Paisley's face as a set off against the account for tea and coffee which he discovers. When is this holiday of yours to begin? You would be most

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amused to hear a debate in the Assembly, and of course when I have to be Prime Minister, and Hansard too, I cannot give you more than the barest outline of the speeches.—I am, yours sincerely, H. BROADBENT.

LETTER XIII.

The Rev. G. MASTERMAN to H. BROADBENT, Esq.

3rd May 1882.

MY DEAR HARRY—I am at a loss to know what advice to give you about your store. In the first place, you are so much more advanced a pupil in social problems than I, that I feel I cannot advise you without presumption. In the second place, I think your members of the Assembly are all so ingenious that you might be happy with any if the others would go away. You have appealed to me in one of your letters as a clergyman of the Church of England, and I do not mean to come down from that pedestal in my reply. Mr. Pelton's scheme, then, appears to me quite impracticable, even if it were not unchristian. To begin with: you must not forget that your estimates are based on averages, and that therefore you often impute consumption of some things to persons that never dream of them. For instance, your children, I hope, have not yet taken to spirits. So if you exiled every one who drank more than the average allowance, you would expel all the men from the estate, while, if you made the average what a man could use, and

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the people took the permitted quantity per head you would exceed your estimate.

The ticket system I also consider impracticable, because nothing would be more simple than to evade it. Inhabitants could treat friends or do their shopping for them. Besides, why make a distinction between strangers and inhabitants? It is most clearly contrary to *Progress and Poverty.*

I must be introduced to Mr. O'Brien when I come to see you. His notion of the standing army was excellent, and stamps him as a man of genius. Nevertheless, I can see no reason why an Englishman has a better right to live in England than a Frenchman. If a state has a right to any piece of land, I do not see how you can prevent individuals having the same right. A state is only the representative of individuals, and if you know the population and acreage of any country, and divide one by the other, you infallibly bring it out that each person owns so much land. Or, to put an extreme case, suppose a plague to sweep off all the inhabitants of a country but one, the survivor should surely be a legitimate landowner. In short, either individuals may own land, or no collection of individuals may own it, or no state may own land; and if that is the case, how do you establish the right of a state to the rents of it?

But all this is contrary to *Progress and Poverty,* and therefore inadmissible; and besides, Mr. George would no doubt say that he would abolish nationalities just as much as landholders, if they were objectionable. Though this argument has grown out of Mr. O'Brien's suggestion, I need not say that I do not think it could be practically entertained for a moment.

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Mrs. Barrett's views I decline, as a clergyman of the Church of England, to even discuss, but there is something to be said for her husband's solution; at least, it will secure that you have a surplus, and I think it superior to Miss Beldon's, because the latter is retrograde in reimposing taxation, while the former simply limits his efforts in advance by the amount of his power, which is practical.

Mr. Barrett's motion possesses another advantage—that you need not ask Colonel Maitland's permission to adopt it, if you go on the principle of first come first served, because there is no restraint of liberty. On the whole, therefore, I incline to Mr. Barrett's scheme, because it does not restrain liberty, is not retrograde, and secures the surplus while maintaining the store. Whether you follow this advice or not, I shall look forward to hearing the result.—I am, your sincere friend,

G. MASTERMAN.

LETTER XIV.

HENRY BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

30*th May* 1882.

MY DEAR GEORGE—Since the Assembly adopted Mr. Barrett's scheme things have not gone on very smoothly. In the first place, very unfortunately we pitched upon Monday as the best day of the week on which to begin the distribution. In a very short time we observed that all the low-priced supplies for the week were drawn on the Monday, and that in a very short time.

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We thought at first that this was natural, because every one might be expected to take his proportion of the cheap provisions as soon as possible, to make sure of not being left out in the cold. Still, I was not quite easy, because I noticed from the accounts that more was being sold at the store generally than usual—that is, that the average consumption was going up. At last, one session night, the Assembly was requested to receive a deputation of its constituents. Five of them were allowed to enter, and I am sorry to say they were not a very reputable sample of the population. Mr Paisley whispered in my ear that I must be careful of them, for they were very improvident men, well known as never having a penny, and living from hand-to-mouth, and one pay-day to another. I did not share Paisley's antagonism, because I thought these were the very men whose misery it was my mission to relieve. I asked them what they wanted, and they told me they wished the distribution of cheap food to commence as from Saturday each week, instead of from Monday.

I asked the reason, and was informed that they had reaped no benefit from the store since Mr. Barrett's motion was passed, because they always bought on Saturday, and had nothing to spend on Monday. The deputation retired, and we considered their petition. Knowing as I did that more stores were being bought than represented the ordinary consumption per head, it was evident that the impecunious must suffer, and the rich get the advantage.

But two questions arose—

I. WHY WAS MORE FOOD CONSUMED?

II. HOW WERE WE TO GET EVERY ONE AN EQUAL SHARE?

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The reply to the first question seemed to me, either that we were getting a greater population, or that men's wants were increasing, as Mr. George says they will increase with greater facilities for indulgence, or that some malversation was going on. I put all these matters to the Assembly, and when I ended up with the statement of the three explanations, a smile went round the Assembly.

At last Mr. Sharples, a member, rose, and prefaced his remarks by saying that he would not tell me a lie. I hastily explained that I did not suspect him, but he did not appear either gratified or the reverse by my disclaimer. He then explained the phenomenon. It seems that some enterprising shopkeeper has been buying up the cheap provisions, and retailing them at a price only fractionally lower than that of the store. He has thus succeeded in absorbing all the taxes, less the small portion necessary to form an inducement to his customers. Mr. Sharples was in partnership with this shopkeeper, but they quarrelled, and hence he has exposed him. The reason that more food has been used has been that the population has greatly increased by the number of strangers who have come in to deal with the shopkeeper, who gave them a preference over inhabitants because they would not reveal his transactions; and as the store is the next cheapest shop, the business in it has naturally enlarged.

This announcement mortified me extremely, as I did not think it at all fair that members of the Assembly should defeat and make profit of measures passed by it. However, Mr. Sharples excused himself on the ground that he had not suggested the proposal, which, as you remember, was Mr. Barrett's, but that

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when it was passed he saw no reason why he should not make profit out of it as well as any one else.

The next question, then, was how to prevent this operation. Evidently you could not dictate to a man what he was to buy, nor how much, and we all felt if we recurred to the old way of selling all things at cost price, less taxes, we should soon be hopelessly insolvent.

At last Mr. Paisley made a suggestion illustrative of his remarkably acute mind. It was this. We have a constant sum of money to give away per week. Let us sell everything at cost price, and devote the sum representing taxation among the dealers at the store in the proportion of their weekly accounts. Thus he showed that it made no matter what day a man came, he always got the benefit of the remission of taxation. I thought this an excellent plan, because it gave the family men who are large consumers the most benefit, and besides left the surplus intact. But Mr. Barrett pointed out that it would simply be a great benefit to moneyed people, because those who had most to spend got the most relief, whereas the people I wished to relieve were such as the members of the deputation, whose weekly account, I believe, would be extremely small and very difficult to collect. In fact, they have been by far the best customers of the shopkeeper, because he was able, in consequence of his enormous profits, to give them credit, which the store, as you know, never does.

Miss Beldon here interposed with much animation in favour of Mr. Paisley's scheme, because she said she presumed that the remission of taxation would be devoted in proportion to the gross account, and not

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item by item. This would to a certain extent meet her desire to tax spirits in order to free coffee and tea; and no doubt she was right. But the objections to the plan were very many, and especially to my mind they seemed insuperable, because they were all in favour of the monied interests, whom I do not so much desire to help.

I may here remark, George, that somehow or other everything you can devise in financial matters seems to work round in favour of the capitalist. However clever you may be, or however much you may think you have provided for the poor, capital always finds some means of making it work in favour of itself; not fraudulently, but simply in the ordinary way of business.

At length, having discussed the matter in all its bearings, we decided that the best thing we could do was simply to grant the prayer of the deputation, and let the distribution begin on Saturdays instead of Mondays. We have had one week of it, but I am sorry to say the result has not been satisfactory. The wages were paid on Friday night, and the moment the store opened it was beset by crowds of men, among whom I noticed several of the leaders of the deputation. They had also brought friends with them, and the result was an evil of much the same kind as that on the day succeeding my birthday. All the men went in for whisky and tobacco—the most expensive things they could buy—and the result was that the stock of low priced goods was cleared out in even less time than the shopkeeper's took; and the worst was, it was wasted and no one got the benefit of it.

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Especially heartrending it was to see the poor women and children of the hard-working labourers, who had been calculating on this day to lay in their little stock for the week. They came to the store and tried to get in, but were either accidentally hustled out by the crowd of noisy men shoving to get in, or had the doors shut purposely in their faces, that they might not diminish the stock of cheap goods. Many of these ruffians, for I fear I can call them nothing else, had simply come in from Whatchester for the day; and it was really annoying to think I was making such sacrifices, merely to perpetuate tyranny like this. At last the store closed; and then I must confess that I introduced some of the women by a back door and let them buy cheaply, determining that for once the surplus might go to the wall. What Mr. Paisley will say I don't know; but if the worst comes to the worst, I'll defy him. I know I shall be supported by Miss Beldon, who saw the whole transaction, and Mr. Sharples is so ashamed of his peculation that I think he would support me too. However, Assembly or not, I could not send the poor creatures away disappointed.

I never felt so inclined to get up a fight as when I passed over the green, and saw the men who had caused all this trouble fooling about, making remarks on the passengers, and hustling the respectable people off the path. Ever so many of these were strangers, who had no business on the estate. As I passed the last house, I met Mr. O'Brien, and he saw how mortified I was. I told him about the women, and he sympathised so much that I also let him into the secret of the distribution of cheap food out of hours. I

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begged him to support me when this came up in the Assembly, and he shook my hand, the tears standing in his eyes, and vowed he would support me in fifty Assemblies. Then he turned towards the band of ruffians on the green, and remarked., "What a pleasure it would be to bring the standing army in on them, sor;" and for the moment I confess I thoroughly agreed with him.

The worst of the whole thing is, that this morning I got a very polite letter from the Lord-Lieutenant of the county, saying that the attention of the Government has been called to the riotous state of the people on the estate. He says he understands from Colonel Maitland that I am attempting some social reform, and cannot but think that so far it has been rather an alteration than an improvement. He ends by requesting me to give him some explanation of the confusion, and an assurance that it will not occur again, otherwise he may be forced to some unpalatable measures.

I am almost at my wits' end for an expedient. I can't stop the store without asking Colonel Maitland, and I know how he will triumph when I have to do it.

Can you help me, dear George? If so, write at once, and relieve your distracted friend,

H. BROADBENT.

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LETTER XV.

The Rev. G. MASTERMAN to H. BROADBENT, Esq.

1*st June* 1882.

MY DEAR HARRY—Your dirge of the 30th arrived yesterday. I am really very sorry to hear of all your disappointments; but I think that, perhaps, you are not patient enough. There are cases where the best laws and best schemes will not succeed, because all laws depend on the concurrence of those who live under them. It would be little use attaching penalties to any crime, unless society considered it better that a man should suffer such a punishment rather than they should be annoyed.

I think that virtuous indignation, such as that of Mr. O'Brien, should have a little time to fructify, and then we shall find that your schemes will have more chance. Let the store work as it can till August, when the surplus is to be divided, and the financial year generally comes to a close. In the meantime, you cannot prevent people dealing at the store; but you can prevent the disgraceful scenes on Saturday night. First issue a proclamation to the people: appeal to their good feeling to support you in your efforts for their benefit; and especially speak against the drunkards, and hold them up to public reprobation.

Having tried moral suasion, then end up with a significant hint that the police have orders to apprehend any one who is either drunk or disorderly; and take care that the sentences are pretty heavy in the first one or two instances. This, I think, will bring

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the rioters to their senses, and then honest people may get their own. At least, I am sure that constant change is more likely to stimulate than allay disorder. In August, if the store does not work, you can ask Colonel Maitland to allow you to abolish it, and will not lay yourself open to the charge of being hasty in your decision. I believe that an intelligent relaxation of Mr. Barrett's rule of regular weekly quantities may bring relief in many worthy cases. Of course it will diminish the surplus; but if the people on the estate give themselves up to reckless extravagance in taxable commodities, I see no reason why they should not pay for it in reduction of their surplus.

In short, I think it possible your store may succeed if you are patient. I am certain it will not if you are hasty. I hope this will commend itself to you, even though not brilliant enough to set against the store transaction.—Yours very sincerely,

G. MASTERMAN.

LETTER XVI.

H. BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

30th June 1882.

MY DEAR GEORGE—When I resolved to give my patience a trial, you will remember I also promised to test yours, and give you no hint of how your advice worked till it had had a month's trial. The time has now elapsed, and like all things in this world, it seems to have a certain amount of good and a certain amount

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of harm in it. In the first place, I don't think it will make the people any more economical, though they have certainly been more sober since the proclamation. The weekly distribution begins on Saturday, and there is still the rush to buy that there was; and I am sorry to say that the weak still go to the wall. The men crowd in and spend their money quietly, but with considerable determination to let no one else come in till they have finished. Besides, every day I notice new faces coming in to deal at the store. None of these men live on the estate; in fact, one of them confessed to me that he came from beyond Whatchester; but said that he knew I thought he had as much right to live on the estate as any of those who were on it now; and he thanked me kindly for my liberality, which, he said, was that of a perfect gentleman.

I very often have to give beneficences to the poor women and children, for I must say that though I don't dispute the right of the men to have the good things, my sympathies are much more with the women. In fact, my sympathy has, I fear, led me into the only real infringement of public liberty of which I can be accused. It was an attempt to prevent all but those who live on the estate from dealing at the store, and I am not quite sure yet what the result will be.

You will wonder how I attained my object, and to tell you the truth I had some trouble. Mr. O'Brien, who, since the day when we met, and he saw that I somewhat favoured the standing army, has been my fast friend, became my confidant in the matter, and counselled some attempt, because he thought it must entail an appeal to the shillelagh. I enlisted him into

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the cause, but did not consider myself bound to use his weapon, and this is how I managed without it.

One Friday morning I posted to every inhabitant on the estate a notice, which he would get on Friday evening, saying that instead of selling the cheap provisions at the store at one end of the village, we would sell them in the school-room at the other at the usual time. Next morning the strangers were all on the alert for the early opening of the store, which, owing to the press of business elsewhere, was a little later than usual. Mr. O'Brien and I sat at one of the cottage windows and laughed in our sleeves. The door opened in the usual way, the people crowded in, and it was not long before we saw those who had first entered coming out and encouraging the others to take their share. In they went, and in the meantime the first-comers went knocking at all the doors to ask why the store was not selling cheap. There was no one to reply, because all the inhabitants were out shopping at the school-room. At last one came down the street. Every one rushed to him and asked him what was the matter. He only laughed. Finally they offered to bribe him, and he took a penny per man, and then mounting a stone, he shouted at the top of his voice—"You great flats! They're selling at the school-room to-day." The effect was magical. There was a shout, and in an instant the whole green became a race-course, each doing his best to reach the school-room before the rest.

Mr. O'Brien and I were convulsed with laughter, which was redoubled when we saw them all returning empty-handed, the store having sold out. I was delighted, but thought it *infra dig.* to confess my

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share of the transaction. Mr. O'Brien, however, did not, and I am sorry to say he told my share as well as his own, with the result that for the first time I received the thanks of the Assembly, and bask in the smiles of the multitude. Since then we have scarcely had a stranger here on Saturday.

I am pleased to tell you of a sign of life in the state. There were at the end of the village some ruined cottages, an eyesore to the place, of no use to any one. A builder offered to take these over, and pay the present agricultural rent per acre, if we would let him take the *debris* of the cottages, repair them, and let them in perpetuity for what he could get. The matter was put before the Assembly and considered in accordance with *Progress and Poverty*, for Mr. George wishes to guarantee to every one the proceeds of his own industry, his only wish being to prevent individuals engrossing the result of the common labour. The building is nearly finished, the cottages are filled as fast as they are built, and afford another instance that the earth is barren, not from the niggardliness of nature, but from the carelessness of man. For the man who allowed these cottages to fall into disuse must have been a lazy fellow, who could not take the trouble to keep in repair a valuable property, which needed only a little attention and a small yearly outlay to become a source of income.

Another circumstance also has engaged my attention and that of the Assembly. Mr. Dixon is a member, and farms about 500 acres of the estate adjacent to Whatchester. I believe I have never mentioned his name before, because he seldom speaks in the House, but no doubt, like the sailor's parrot, he thinks the more.

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The other day he came to me, and said that he resigned his farm in favour of a certain Mr. Shayer, who would be the tenant in future, and responsible for the rent. There was no harm in this, as I thought; but on mentioning the matter to Mr. Paisley, he very soon came to the conclusion that there might be. He busied himself in inquiries for a few days, and found out that Mr. Shayer was a stockbroker in Whatchester, in a good way of business. We could not understand why he wanted to become a farmer, nor why Mr. Dixon should retire in his favour, especially as Mr. Paisley discovered that Dixon remained in his holding as farmer just as before, only that Shayer had a room or two in the house, and lived as Dixon's lodger. Another queer thing was that Mr. Shayer never so much as looked at the land, and it was quite evident he did not intend to take up farming.

In this perplexity we appealed to Mr. Dixon one Assembly night for an explanation; and, after some beating about the bush, he gave it. It seems that Mr. Shayer spends annually a considerable sum of money in postage and bill stamps, and also in telegrams. He wanted to have the right to save all this, and of course nothing was so easy as to become a tenant on the estate. He therefore made an arrangement by which he pays Mr. Dixon a certain sum for his tenant-right, as they call it, while the latter farms the land nominally as servant of Mr. Shayer; but really he is his own master, and is better off by having the lump sum in hand, and whatever profit he makes on Mr. Shayer's board and lodging.

Of course the murder was out then, and every one saw how this arrangement might suit the parties to it.

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Upon it, however, arose a most interesting point, which seemed to me fundamental. It was put by Mr. Paisley. He contended that a sale of tenant-right was utterly illegal, because it was an attempt by a private person to exact rent. He did not deny that land might be of more value to one man than to another. For instance, putting aside the case of Mr. Shayer, a good farmer could get far more out of land than a bad farmer, and could, therefore, afford to pay more rent. But Mr. Paisley held that this increase of rent was due not to the bad farmer, but to the state, because it was well known that rents tended to rise, and the same thing which made rents tend to rise, made them exist at all, to wit—the labour of the community, and the return for that labour was therefore due to the community.

On the other hand, Mr. Barrett held that the extra rent was due to the good farmer, because it was he alone who had developed this hitherto latent quality in the land, and therefore to raise his rent simply because he was a better farmer than another was to put a premium on bad farming.

Mr. Sharples did not agree to this. He said that to sell a tenant-right implied that a man had a right to sell; but no one had a right to land at all. He held that the state might constantly put up land to the highest bidder year by year, or month by month, if it pleased. The only obligation the state lay under was to compensate the outgoing tenant for expenditure which he had made in permanent or unexhausted improvements. He pointed out that if a man had a right either to sell his interest, or to remain in his holding as long as he pleased, one of two things must

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happen. The man would either be exacting rent from the moment that the tenant-right came to be saleable, or he would be tempted to remain in his holding, and exclude others from their right to live ou the land, and rob the state of that increment of value which it constantly conferred. In other words, he became as much of a monopolist as the shopkeeper whom the Assembly had so lately censured. Mrs. Barrett here rose, and said that for rent she did not care a button. Population was the thing that made rent, so whether rent made poverty or not, there could be no doubt that population did, either *proprio motu* or by the agency of rent. She held, however, that that abstract question was quite beside the present argument. If she had her way, this difficulty could not have arisen, because she would make it just as illegal for stockbrokers to derive profit from the rise and fall of stocks, as it was for landlords to derive profit from the rise and fall of land.

She held the cases to be absolutely parallel, for the stockbroker bought shares in companies for which he never did anything. He held them for some time, and sold them at a profit, not because he had improved their value, but because of the accidental prosperity of the company. She held these gains ought to go into the common fund, just as much as the rise in the value of land. Moreover, she added, the gain of the stockbroker was really more iniquitous than that of the landlord, because the rents of the latter only went up when the state was prospering, while the former had been known to derive profit from an absolute loss. She wound up by proposing that all stockbrokers be declared outlaws, which measure would shelve the

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question under discussion. Mrs. Barrett's contention as to the gains of the stockbrokers struck me as highly ingenious, and when I have time I mean to write to Mr. George and ask him about this; but of course her proposition was an infringement of rule seven of the constitution, and could not be adopted.

At last we decided that tenant-right did not exist; that any one might at any time be required to relinquish his holding if the state got a tenant at a better price, though at the same time we agreed that the sitting tenant should always have the refusal of the land at the highest price bid for it, and of course compensation for improvements. It was also agreed that no more leases, such as those granted to the builder, should be given, as being equally contrary to the intention of *Progress and Poverty*. So much for our affairs.

I think of you constantly, and am very sorry to hear of your hard work with your cholera patients. I only hope it will not visit us here, for anything like an epidemic would dislocate all our schemes. I am looking forward to next Saturday, which will decide whether my ruse has banished the strangers finally; and I am equally looking forward to a letter from you, however short.—I am, your loving friend,

H. BROADBENT.

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LETTER XVII.

The Rev. G. MASTERMAN to H. BROADBENT, Esq.

1*st July* 1882.

MY DEAR HARRY—Many thanks for your long and most interesting letter. I think, at least, you have come to no harm by taking my advice, so I content myself by wishing that it may be yet productive of good.

Though eminently consistent with poetical justice, I do not think your dodging of the strangers a piece of sound statesmanship. In the first place, it could never be done in a big state, and therefore is not in the least instructive as an experiment; and in the second, such examples in the government are apt to be demoralising to individuals. In the same way, the private distribution to women and children, though I confess I approved of it at first, seems on reflection to be nothing more than a job, which might be used against you with terrible effect if the power should at the end of the four years be taken out of your hands. For instance, a future president of your little state might consider it a duty to provide for his own relations in this exclusive manner. Such irregularities though most honourable to your kindness of heart may yet do much harm to your cause. I am glad to see so many references in your letters to *Progress and Poverty*, because we must never forget that it is this theory you are trying out, and that to wreck so glorious a principle on some petty rock of your own contriving, would be to discredit it unfairly, and to stultify yourself.

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I am beginning to fear that your store may not work, because there are many points in which you are not under the conditions of a large state when dealing with it, and though it was a most ingenious contrivance, it may have to be put down till what it attempts to effect can be made to work on a large scale.

I am glad to hear about the cottages, because it seems a sign of confidence, which is what all governments so much need. Of course there is another way of looking at it as a sign of increasing population. I don't think it likely that a man who had a cottage which paid him well would have allowed it to fall into bad repair simply from idleness. The explanation may be that his cottage was inferior to most others, that there were more houses then than there were people, and that so the inferior cottage was dismantled because it did not pay to rebuild it. It is possible that the manifold advantages you offer to people living on the estate has created a population where there was none before.

I now come to the third point in your letter. I think that you now seem to be about to give *Progress and Poverty* a really fair trial. If you had failed in consequence of some break-down in the store, Mr. George might have blamed you as a traducer. But here you touch on the pith and marrow of the whole question.

I cannot see that any one ought to have a right to any piece of land except by paying the state as great a rent as any one else would pay for it. In this view there was nothing wrong in Mr. Shayer's proceeding except that he went to Mr. Dixon instead of to you or the Assembly, or whoever represents the state in such

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matters. He could then have forced you to turn Mr. Dixon out, always, understand, paying him for any improvements he may have made during his tenure; and as long as Mr. Shayer chose to pay a higher rent then Mr. Dixon or any one else, he might have lived on the land and made it into a deed box if he liked.

But you cannot give long leases to any one, because by doing so you mortgage the right of posterity to dispose of its own inheritance. Take the case of a man with a fifteen year lease (surely nothing extraordinary) of a field outside Whatchester. Some one builds a factory in an adjacent field, and would extend into the field in question if he could. He buys the consent of the lessee of the field, who thus, without even the ordinary labour of a farmer, reaps a larger rent than he pays to the state, and *pro tanto* damages it. There are no doubt many people, notably the owner of the factory, who would gladly buy out the fifteen year tenant and benefit the state by doing so, and yet the state must wait for fifteen years for its own.

In the same way, if a town arose near Bliston, the cottages of your builder would rise in value. Should he get this increment or the state? On the other hand, if the letting value of the cottages went down, he might claim compensation from the state, I suppose. For if the state is responsible for the increase in the value of property, it is equally so for a fall in the same. If you did not admit this, it would be a sort of heads-I-win tails-you-lose transaction, which would discourage building. On the whole, therefore, I am inclined to agree with Mr. Sharples, and I think he ought to have a diploma of some sort for his foresight.

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Now I must go my rounds again. I believe this fearful disease is dying out, and really if it does not soon do so I fear I shall. I am almost run off my legs and wearied out of my life, and the chief pleasure I have in it is to get some distraction from my wearisome round of pain in penning my thoughts on your model state. Good-bye, and God bless you.

G. MASTERMAN.

LETTER XVIII.

HENRY BROADBENT, Esq., to Colonel MAITLAND, V.C.

4th August 1882.

MY DEAR GUARDIAN—I have carefully abstained from troubling you about my experiment; but I think I must now ask you to read rather a long letter. I wish to introduce a change in the constitution, and, before doing so, must ask your permission. You know that our first object has been to abolish taxation, and with direct taxes this was not difficult, because we knew their amount, and could compound with the state for them; but owing to the limited area of my estate, indirect taxes could not be so easily abolished. We could only purchase these commodities and sell them at a rate representing the price, less taxation; and this tempted strangers to come and deal at our store, and thus threw upon the estate more than its fair share of indirect taxation. We then attempted to limit the quantity sold to the average consumption of each thing per head over the United Kingdom.

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This should have met our wishes if the consumption had not risen, for two reasons. The first was, that strangers still continued either to come in and deal at the store for the day, or, what amounted to the same thing, that they became domiciled on the estate, and so increased the demand. The second was, that the original inhabitants on the estate commenced to consume more of the cheaper commodities per head: the result being that, as the quantity was limited, the weaker members, who were often the people I most wished to help, got no advantage from the measure at all.

If it had only been the strangers who caused this excess, I could, perhaps, have invented some device for excluding them; but the fact is, that the increased consumption of the original inhabitants was in itself quite sufficient to produce the failure which I now proceed to show.

You may, no doubt, think that this failure showed some flaw in my scheme, and that such causes as increase of population or augmented demand might fairly be reckoned on in any state. I admit the force of this reasoning, unless I can show that I am under exceptional circumstances on my estate—circumstances of such a character that they could not occur in a large state. If taxation were abolished in England, there is no reason to suppose that the revenue would lose, by the abolition of indirect taxation, more than the exact amount it derives from each taxable article at the present rate of consumption; even supposing that, in consequence of the abolition of the tax, each inhabitant doubled his consumption of the various articles.

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But if the indirect taxes of England were paid, let us say, to France, then if the government wished to free the people from indirect taxation, it could be done only as I did it: by allowing a drawback on all taxable commodities, which would increase or diminish in amount with the consumption of the people. But such a state of things as that of one nation paying indirect taxes to another is unnatural, and for that reason my store, which attempted to perform such a feat, is unnatural, and has failed. I think you will admit this, and allow me to abolish it, if I show you how I mean to dispose of the funds thus set at liberty.

During the last six months we have spent nearly £5000 more in the store than we should have done. Most of this was lost in the first two months, when the deficit was almost four times as much as was represented by the average consumption of the United Kingdom. This deficit was mainly due to the increased consumption of spirits and tobacco, which are the most expensive things that could possibly have been bought owing to the high duty on both.

Even when we restricted the quantity sold, the deficit tended to increase; in the first place, because it was difficult to draw the line each week at exactly the right point, and of course consumers insisted on getting the benefit of the doubt; and in the second place, because of some operations of my own, whereby, in the attempt to equalise the benefit to all, I allowed some of the women and children to receive the benefit of the cheap provisions, even after the stores had sold the proper quantity. I confess that this measure was wholly irregular; but if you had seen what I saw, I

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don't think you would have done otherwise yourself. To return: all this extra expenditure naturally went to diminish the revenue by increasing taxation, with the result that when, on the first of this month, every person on the estate should have received 30s., there were no funds from which to pay it, because the accounts of goods supplied to the store were made a first charge on the revenue, after the payment of direct taxes.

I think I have made out my case against the store. I have shown that it is unnatural, and does not represent a state of things which could fairly occur in a large State which attempted to carry out the recommendations of *Progress and Poverty*. I ask to be allowed to abolish it, and apply the funds hitherto allotted to the store in the same manner as the surplus of £10,000 was to have been applied—that is, to distribute it among the population in such proportion as the Assembly may deem advisable.

There is another change which I should like to make, and I consider it equally justifiable. You know that we pay £2600 annually to the Government for the privilege of exemption from the various stamp duties. This is no more per head of population than the average over the United Kingdom; but I think it presses rather heavily on my people, who are mainly agricultural, and neither write many letters, nor make wills nor deeds. Besides, I find the privilege was much abused, even in the first days of its existence, to send round circulars of a threatening nature to the inhabitants on the estate, forbidding them to use the baths I had erected at great expense, and to which I proposed to devote £700 annually, on the ground that

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it was taking the bread out of the mouths of the poor. As the baths were put on their trial for a fortnight, and had to stand or fall by the number of people who used them, no wonder they fell.

Apart from this abuse, however, the people are much discontented with what they call the waste of £2600 in stamps. They show that even if they wrote as many letters as the rest of the population of the kingdom, they need only spend three-sevenths of this sum, the remainder being made up of legacy duties, deed stamps, etc., which, of course, don't touch the poor. They point out that we are really relieving the rich at the expense of the poor.

They would therefore much prefer to have this amount also added to the surplus, to retain the taxes on stamps, and to let those people who have deeds or successions pay for them themselves. Another objection to the present system is, that it encourages stock-brokers, a class of people whose profits are quite as illegitimate as those of landlords, to settle on the estate, in consequence of the cheap postage and transfer stamps.

Therefore, to formulate my request, I ask to be allowed to dispose of the £2600 spent under the head of stamps in the same way as the £4550 to be liberated by the abolition of the store.

I think all these requests are so moderate and reasonable, that you will have no difficulty in agreeing to them.

I have had my friend Masterman staying with me. He is most interested in all he sees and hears, and has been of great help to me. It would give me great pleasure if you could come also. I am sure you would

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be amused, and there is still some of the old port left. You would also have the honour of being entertained at Government House by the head of a Republic in the person of—Your affectionate ward,

H. BROADBENT.

LETTER XIX.

Colonel MAITLAND, V.C., to HENRY BROADBENT, Esq.

6th August 1882.

MY DEAR HARRY—I have considered your requests, with due regard to the importance of the subject and my own responsibility as sole arbiter.

I turn first to the subject of the stamps. You object to this payment on three grounds :—

1. That the inhabitants on your estate do not use stamps to the amount you spend.
2. That the abolition of taxes encourages stock-brokers.
3. That the removal of this form of taxation relieves the rich and not the poor.

If your first ground is just, then the course of devoting all the rent to the indiscriminate abolition of taxation is entirely wrong, because there can be no question that some members of society will benefit more than others by each abolition. In that case, a system which compels people to pay in proportion to their requirements is obviously more just and logical; and if so, why does Mr. George abolish it ?

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But Mr. George, in Book VIII., Chap. 3, of *Progress and Poverty*, deliberately decides that the best way of paying taxes is to pay them out of the rent of land, because this, less than any other way, checks production, which is the source of wealth. You must therefore regard your taxpayer as a person to be relieved, not only for his own benefit, but for that of the State, from the burden of unjust exactions; and the greater his burden, the greater his title to relief. You might as well say that because some people were free at the time of the abolition of slavery, no slaves should have been freed, because the change conferred on them a greater boon per head than was accorded to the entirely free. This is quite true; but the argument for the abolition of slavery is that, by some accident, the slaves have been robbed of a privilege which the free have preserved, and that they suffer a daily and hourly loss in consequence. Free society, therefore, is in the same position with regard to slaves that you think landlords occupy with regard to free society. The least that freemen can do is not to perpetuate in the future the injustice of the past; and they may well consider that the slaves have some ground for demanding restitution for the past injustice as well. Exactly in the same way, in the interest not only of the taxpayers, but of the very poor whom you wish to prefer to them, Mr. George supposes that taxpayers have a paramount right to relief from taxation. In fact, he considers taxation as an injustice invented in order to protect another injustice called rent. So much for your first reason.

You next say you wish to discourage stockbrokers. Now, though I have no sympathy with the system of

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gambling which prevails on the Stock Exchange, we must not class all stockbrokers as gamblers. Part of the legitimate business of stockbrokers is to facilitate exchange in securities, just as much as the importer of wheat in exchange for pig iron facilitates the exchange in these commodities. I am prepared to admit that the profits of some stockbrokers do not depend solely on the fair commission on exchange; but to attempt to decide what is fair commission and what is not, is beyond the power of any Government, while to attempt to confiscate the results of successful gambling is an attempt to eliminate chance from human affairs, and might, besides, lay the State open to claims for compensation in cases where gambling transactions have not resulted in profit. Therefore, I cannot sanction your measure on the ground that it will discourage stockbrokers even if they were all gamblers.

Lastly, I come to your third reason, that the re-imposition of stamp duties would fall on the rich and not on the poor. I think I showed in my answer to your first reason that if taxes were iniquitous, or rather more iniquitous than the production of the same result from rents, these people who had been paying these taxes were those who required relief, just as in the case of the abolition of slavery. So, if it can be shown that the rich have been paying all the taxes, then the remission is obviously due to the rich. Any departure from this principle must lead you logically to a periodical levelling of all property, which, as it would be absolutely fatal to enterprise, I am glad to see that Mr. George, in Book IV., Chap. 1, of *Progress and Poverty*, distinctly condemns. He

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says it would be to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Now there are many points in which I differ from Mr. George, but in this at least I agree, that a man has a right to all he can produce by his labour. Mr. George is of opinion that in a State where there is no rent not absorbed by the State, and devoted, as you have been devoting it, first to the abolition of taxation, and then to some object of common utility, he is of opinion that in such a country poverty could not exist; and he is so committed to the statement, that if poverty does exist it seems to me that it must be because his theory is entirely wrong, or because the poverty exists in spite of it, and is due to the fault of the poor.

If the latter is the case, I see no reason why the rich should be in any way taxed to provide for the cost of government in order that the surplus accruing from the confiscation of rent may be applied to the maintenance of the poor. If Mr. George meant to confiscate rent in order to feed the poor he might have said so, but I can find no trace of such an intention in his writings; therefore I decline to allow you to reimpose stamp duties for any of the reasons you allege, simply because it is a departure from the principle on which you are basing your experiment.

With regard to indirect taxes, I see that here you have good ground for demanding some elasticity in your constitution. I think the conditions are not quite those which would hold in a large State, though there can be no doubt that population must inevitably flow to a State where living was as easy as the abolition of indirect taxation would tend to make it.

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Therefore, I will allow you to abolish the store devoting the £4550 which it ought to have absorbed to the same objects as the surplus. I do this because indirect taxes press more equally on every individual in a community than do any of the other taxes, and therefore absolute justice, according to Mr. George, is more likely to be met by commuting this form of taxation into a yearly subsidy than any other. I am also swayed by the reasons given in your letter, and besides wish to spare you the annoyance consequent on the discontent which must arise if the store should again absorb more than its estimated share of the surplus.

Before you can consider this permission as given, however, I require you first to submit to the Assembly the question of how this surplus, which I hope we have now secured, is to be divided. So far, I believe, a census of the population has been taken, and every man, woman, and child is to have an equal share of the surplus. I presume that the share of each child will be handed over to the parents, say till the child is of age. Supposing the share of each child should exceed the cost of its maintenance, is there any provision for saving the surplus for the benefit of the child? Also, have you considered the question, whether the share of children should be as great as that of adults? Is a new census to be taken every half-year, or every time a distribution is made, to include new residents on the estate?

I do not mean to hamper the Assembly in any way if its decision is not contrary to *Progress and Poverty;* but as the surplus is now becoming of more importance, by the departure from the original plan in order

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to increase it, I think I should be informed on these points before sanctioning this departure. If I remember right, the Assembly framed the scheme by which the surplus was to be distributed rather suddenly, and as a side issue to the question of whether it should be spent in baths, etc., and it is just possible that the points I have mentioned were not thought out at the time.

I notice in several parts of your letters such expressions as "the people I most wish to help," etc. I hope you bear in mind that you have no right in this experiment to prefer one class of people to another. If you had intended to devote your income to charitable objects, it should have been kept in your own hands. For, as the head of a State, you must not indulge in irregularities, however well meant: they are sure to recoil on you in some way. Besides, any failure is sure to be attributed to these errors of yours.

I have now, I think, replied to the whole of your letter. If I have been diffuse in giving my reasons, I can assure you it was from no doubt in my own mind, but simply to convince you.

I am glad to say that the Lord Lieutenant was pleased with your letter. He also informed me that your people are now much quieter. I hope you will be able to keep them so.—I am, yours sincerely,

HUGH MAITLAND

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LETTER XX.

HENRY BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

15*th October* 1882.

DEAR GEORGE—I have a great deal to tell you, and scarcely know where to begin; but as Colonel Maitland represents the supreme power in my little republic, I think I'll begin with him. You remember, of course, his letter in August, which gave me leave to abolish the store. His permission depended on his approval of the manner in which I proposed to dispose of the surplus, and of course I put it to the Assembly at once.

According to Mr. Barrett's proposal, which would have governed the disposal of the surplus last half-year, had there been any surplus to distribute, every individual on the estate, of whatever age, had to get an equal share of the surplus. Colonel Maitland inquired how we intended to assess the population, and whether we made the distribution irrespective of age; and if so, how we intended to protect the rights of minors, in case the money falling to their share exceeded the cost of their maintenance.

I put the whole matter before the Assembly, and we had a most interesting debate.

After many suggestions as to taking the census every half-year, etc., Mr. Paisley hit upon a method of ascertaining the population which was very happy. He proposed that a committee should be appointed to whom we should hand over the original census book. This committee was to be in communication with the

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registrar of births and deaths, and as any one died his name was to be struck off the roll. If any one ceased to live on the estate, his name was to be furnished by neighbours to the committee, a sum of one shilling being given to the informer for each person thus struck off. This dealt with deaths and desertions. The increase of the population was ascertained thus:—The lists were to be kept open for three months immediately succeeding the close of a half-year. During this time any fresh residents or new-born children had to be registered in the books, giving full name, address, age, and occupation, if any. At the end of three months the books were closed, and the entries were tabulated, printed, and exposed to public view, as the lists on which the next distribution would be made three months thence. Every one was to attend in person to receive his or her quota. If any one died during the three months, his share could be given to his relations on proof of death, but, of course, he was struck off the roll for the next six months and for ever. People who left the estate during the three months might return for their allowance, or lose it if they failed to return, being also struck off for any future distribution. Forfeitures thus occurring were carried forward to the next half-year.

Mr. Paisley showed that every one would have an interest in sending in the names of people who had left the estate, and for this reason he wished the printed lists to be exposed. There were also local as well as general lists; to the former of which the inhabitants of each district might turn their special attention.

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This plan seemed so complete that it was adopted at once, with many congratulations to Mr. Paisley on his cleverness, and I am glad Colonel Maitland approved of it too.

The next question was—In what proportion should the distribution be made?

Mr. Barrett moved that his original motion should stand. Mrs. Barrett denounced this as a direct encouragement to population. As far as I could make out, she would have not only allowed nothing to minors, but have reduced the share of parents in some ratio inversely proportional to the number and ages of their children; but the scheme was quite impracticable, and was promptly suppressed. Then Miss Beldon rose. She said she would give the poor little children all she could. They had as much right to live as we had, poor things, and we must not forget that we were all in the same position once. But she did not like the notion of giving this money to the children, because it might be supposed in some way to relieve their parents of the necessity of providing for them, and she appealed to the Assembly what use would half-a-sovereign be to a baby, when all it wanted was a penn'orth of milk? She therefore proposed that all adults should receive equal shares, without distinction of sex; that each child under age should have half the share of an adult; that this sum should be paid to the parents, who should be responsible for the maintenance of the children. She did not propose to make the parents in any way accountable for the expenditure of this sum. Children, she said, ought to be in subjection to their parents, just as wives should obey their husbands; and she

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added, with many blushes but great confidence, that she was sure if she did her duty by Jack Tomlinson he would do his duty by her and the children—God bless him! for he had reformed so much in the last month or two, that she had little difficulty in believing that at the same rate he would shortly become a paragon of perfection.

Rounds of applause followed this official declaration of Miss Beldon's engagement. Every one crowded to congratulate her; after which, as I believed her motion was very good, I took advantage of the enthusiasm to ask them to pass it in honour of the occasion. The only dissentient was Mrs. Barrett, who declined to vote.

Miss Beldon's resolution was accepted by Colonel Maitland, and is now a fundamental law of the constitution. Miss Beldon is now Mrs. Tomlinson, but I shall always call her Miss Beldon to you, to prevent confusion.

Three months have now elapsed since the scheme of Mr. Paisley came into operation, and the lists on which the next half-year's distribution is to take place are complete. I was perfectly astounded to find what an increase there had been in the population. We have gained nearly seven hundred inhabitants, and I have taken the trouble to analyse the lists.

In the first place, the cottages I told you of in one of my previous letters are by no means the only ones which have been built. Quite a little village has arisen about Whatchester, and the prospect of a bonus of £3 a-year has decided many people to leave other houses and come into these. The builders are making a fine thing out of it, because most of them made the

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arrangements to take the land at agricultural rent before the motion suggested by Mr. Sharples was passed, that the State might at any time let a piece of land to a higher bidder, after paying the tenant for what he had built on it at cost price. Since this motion passed, I am sorry to say that building has entirely ceased, the builders saying that they don't see the fun of building a house which will be sold over their heads if it proves a good bargain, and thrown on their hands if it does not.

The result is, that though two hundred people live in the new houses, the remaining five hundred are lodged in the original houses of the estate. This causes great overcrowding—so much so, in fact, that I fear we may have some epidemic if it is not stopped.

Of the other five hundred new inhabitants, I find that a hundred and fifty are strangers who have married inhabitants either male or female. Of course, in both cases, we are almost sure to be the domicile of the new-married pair, because residence on the estate represents some £6 a-year towards their housekeeping. In fact, I believe, and it is generally believed in the Assembly, that this new measure has stimulated marriage very much. I hear it hinted that it has something to do with Miss Beldon's change of state.

The remaining three hundred and fifty people I should be just as glad to see out of the country. They seem to represent the ne'er-do-weels of the various families, who have never been able to work at home, have wandered away, and, like many other rolling stones, gathered no moss. These people have really a far better right to live on the estate, as far as heredity goes, than the two hundred inhabitants of

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the new cottages, or the hundred and fifty new-married people, because they are children of tenants on the estate; but I need hardly say I had rather have double the number of either of the two former classes than any of the latter.

Nevertheless, they have been instrumental in bringing some very queer characters into the estate; and about one of them I must give you an account.

I was sitting one morning in my little house, making out some statistics relating to the paupers on the estate, for whom I am glad to say that the existing poor-rate has hitherto sufficed, when a very strange-looking individual opened the garden gate and sauntered up to the door. He was dressed in a suit of seedy black, with wide-open waistcoat, which displayed a vista of dirty frilled shirt and a knotted black neckcloth, arranged in a *degagè* style. His chin should have been shaved a few days, and his hair cut the same number of weeks previously. He wore a wideawake hat on one side of his head, and carried a note-book in one hand, and in the other a short and greasy lead-pencil. He walked as if rapt in meditation, gazing up at the sky with his fishy blue eyes, knitting a pair of indistinctly marked eyebrows, and pausing occasionally to jot down thoughts in his book. I was sitting at the open window, so, without ceremony, he approached, and seating himself on the sill, remained silent for a minute or so. At last he spoke:

"In an advanced age such as ours, none but the grossly ignorant can pretend that the Biblical myth of the fall of man is a record of facts. I am inclined to consider it as an allegory. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is Thought. Doubtless it was

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the dread lest, by use of this engine, man should become too wise, that induced the First Cause to harass him with perpetual work. Work and Thought are, then, antagonistic."

Without noticing his lack of ceremony, I remarked that, so far as his last sentence went, Mr. George also held the same view.

"I know he does," replied my friend, Mr. Manly, for such was the man's name. "He, too, is a great thinker, and has discovered how absolutely incompatible are Labour and Thought. Ah," continued he, pressing his hands to his forehead, after laying down his book and pencil for the purpose, "when I think of the good that even so weak a brain as this might do to my fellow-men. When I think of the numerous trains of reasoning sketched roughly on the pages of that book; when I think of the countless revelations daily flashed before my mind's eye, and reflect that the need of daily bread is the sordid tyrant which denies me the leisure to unfold them to the world; when I think of all this, I am tempted to believe, with the poor savages, that some spiteful devil is the arbiter of our destinies!"

I asked what special subject occupied him so much. "What special subject?" said he. "Ah, sir! can even you be so little advanced in the science of cognition that you do not know that Thought cannot be divided? As well might you take a teacup from the mighty ocean and generalise from that the flow of the tides, the passage of the Gulf Stream, or the eddying of the cyclone. Thought is the great book of the Universe; and man must grasp the volume, or how can he read the chapters? For the last ten years I have been

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endeavouring to systematise Thought in the abstract —I have been striving to make myself master of the great realm of thinking. After that, I shall visit as a sovereign each petty province of knowledge in its turn. I can assure you, sir, that, considered in the light of this great revelation, what the world is accustomed to call great men are very puny objects indeed. Shakespeare seems to have had occasional glimpses of that universality to which I am but now attaining. Locke seems to have viewed the promised land and turned aside to explore that desert called the understanding. But no one—I repeat it, no one—has ever attempted such a wide generalisation as that which possesses me. But to elaborate this requires time; and time in the vulgar equation of the earth is money; and money, because without it man cannot live, rules like a demon his imagination, and takes precedence of the rightful sovereign, Thought!"

Becoming interested, I asked him if he could give me a slight sketch of this new scheme, by which it seemed he intended to embrace all knowledge without touching any.

"That, sir," he replied, "is my difficulty! It is here," he said (tapping his note book), "and here," (tapping his forehead); "but to systematise it requires time, and I have not that. Had I a year of leisure—but one year!"

You remember, George, that in *Progress and Poverty* it is especially set forth that the abolition of poverty must produce many a thinker previously denied the right to think. It seemed to me that here was such a man; and I resolved to propose to the Assembly to subsidise him at least for a year, to give

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him time to elaborate his principle. I told him I should do so, at which he seemed much pleased, and said he hoped it would not be less than £100 a-year, because brain-work was very hard work, and required proportionately high nutrition. I thought his request reasonable, and so we parted.

Next night happened to be an Assembly night, and I made the proposition in a short speech. I pointed out that the measure was in accordance with *Progress and Poverty*. I dilated on the credit the Assembly would gain if Mr. Manly's system was really a boon to science, and finally I proposed that £100 should be given to him for one year from that date, by which time we should be able to judge of his system.

Mr. Dixon then rose: and giving a description of Mr. Manly, not complimentary, but near enough to be unmistakable, inquired if that was the man I meant. I replied it was, and he then burst into a fit of laughter. He said he had a dog that could do in a week more good than Mr. Manly could do in a year; for the dog could fetch home sheep, and it was well known that a "good contriver was clean gone with a heavy eater." (I presume, in this case, the dog was the contriver, and Manly the eater.) He said Manly was an idle, dissipated scoundrel, who had failed in every trade he took up; and no wonder he wanted to get round things without touching them, since he burnt his fingers with everything he touched. He said that if you gave £5 for all Manly could think in his life, and £5 for all he could do, and made a contract to keep him during the time, that you would have made a very dear bargain, and ended by moving a direct negative.

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Mrs. Barrett contented herself by moving an amendment, that if £100 could be spared for the encouragement of Thought it should be bestowed on Mrs. Besant.

Mr. Paisley did not think any one should be paid for thinking, and certainly not Mr. Manly; and the motion was lost by a large majority.

I was sorry for Mr. Manly, so I went to him and told him of the adverse vote, but said that I would for one month give him £8, at the end of which time he was to propound his scheme, when, if I thought it worth further subsidy, I would continue to pay him at the same rate.

During the month he seemed to think a recumbent attitude the most favourable to thought, for he got up very late and went to bed early, and spent the remainder of the time on the village green, whence no doubt he made his observations on men and things. At the end of the month he brought me a very badly written and spelt manuscript, which I send you; but I must say I can make neither head nor tail of it. I ventured to hint this to him, whereupon he burst out into a wild declamation, said it was not fair to judge him by this beginning of his work, and indignantly demanded a continuance of his salary. I politely declined to do this. He then abused me roundly, swore and raved, and finally informed me that I and my precious (this was not quite the word he used) Assembly would soon find out that he could think more than they either liked or imagined.

I allowed him to go without reply, and it was not long before he commenced to carry his threat into execution. The population has increased by 700

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people, and though the surplus has been augmented by the abolition of the store, the share of an adult is no more than £4, 16s. per annum. Also, though the population has increased, the employment of the people has not increased in proportion, and the result is that many are out of work. Of those who are in this condition some are people who really want to work; but the rest are, I am afraid, people who only make a pretence of wanting work in order to excite sympathy. For instance, all the 350 prodigal sons are out of work, and it is not very difficult to see that they do not pine for it any more now than they did before they left home.

I begin to think that Mr. Manly is not very fond of work either, and since my refusal to pay him for elaborating his system of Thought, he has devoted his energies to spreading a feeling of disaffection among the unemployed people on the estate. They have a reporter in the Assembly, and his notes are carefully read over by a committee of which Mr. Manly is president. Any resolution that can be twisted in an objectionable way is seized and made the subject of public meeting on the village green, where resolutions are passed and propositions made which would make your hair stand on end.

Of course this does not do much harm, because unless I dissolve the Assembly it need care nothing for the opinion of outsiders. But I don't like the spirit of the resolutions, nor the evident intention to upset all our schemes.

I should like if possible to quiet Mr. Manly, but I could not do so without giving him a £100 a-year to think, and perhaps linking it with a stipulation that

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he was not to speak; but then I cannot afford to give away my income like that, and besides, there will soon be enough imitators of Mr. Manly if it were found that the reward of such exertions was a pension.

At present there have been no evil consequences, and I do not like to anticipate harm; but if you could give me any hint how to grapple with the difficulty, I should be infinitely obliged.—I am, your loving friend,

H. BROADBENT.

LETTER XXI.

The Rev. G. MASTERMAN to H. BROADBENT, Esq.

18*th November* 1882.

MY DEAR HARRY—I am in great haste, and can only send you a short letter. I am much disturbed about these unemployed men—they are always dangerous. Could you not manage to get them work, or, if they won't work, to prove it to the rest of the people, and so discredit them. If there is really no ground for agitation, Mr. Manly's efforts will do no harm; but if his appeals are addressed to people suffering hardship, I fear they may prove very mischievous. Above all, get them employed.—Yours, in haste,

G. MASTERMAN.

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LETTER XXII.

HENRY BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

3rd March 1883.

MY DEAR GEORGE—At last we have really got a surplus, and it has been distributed. On the 24th of last month we gave out the large sum of £7275. It seems a tremendous income for half-a-year, does it not? Yet it was a mere pittance when divided among the many people to whom it was due.

I promised you a statement of the result of our census as soon as it was made up, and though you may think me very dilatory, I can tell you it was no light work collating the various sheets, detecting frauds and double entries, and classifying the people as either adults or minors. I am sorry to say that many attempts were made to impose upon us, by passing off minors as adults. Sometimes these were combated by neighbours, and I had to hear evidence and decide in many cases, so that you can easily imagine my task was not light.

However, putting that aside, let me give you the results. As I think I told you in a former letter, there has been a considerable increase in the population, which now amounts to 4030 people. Of these, about half are minors, and the rest adults; and as we have £14,550 to distribute, and minors get half the allowance of adults,

Each adult gets ...£4 16 0 per annum.
Each minor gets... 2 8 0 „

I think I omitted to tell you that paupers have

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hitherto been excluded from this distribution, just in the same way as they are excluded from the right to vote, etc. But I must say I owe quite a debt of gratitude to the paupers for keeping so nicely within the limits of the sum set apart for them; because, if they had exceeded it, I should have been obliged to extract from the surplus the cost of their maintenance, and there would have been no end of confusion.

The 25th February was kept as a general holiday on the estate, and every one came to Bliston to receive the half-yearly subsidy. There was no crowding or disturbance as there had been at the store, because the lists had been published long before, and every one knew, not only what he had to receive, but also that the funds were sufficient.

It was quite a treat to see the mothers coming up, some with their babies in their arms, and receiving what was to them a little fortune. Miss Beldon, assisted by some of the younger girls, had manufactured little bags, in which the sums, all ready counted, were placed; and we had some very funny scenes when the babies held out their chubby hands as members of the State, or some little dot, whose eyes scarcely reached the level of the pay-counter, informed the clerk that "if he pleased she was Mary Hunter, and had come for her money." Of course the parents stood near while their families filed past, and the sums were paid to them; but many of them stopped outside, and gave the little ones threepence or sixpence, with which they at once ran off to the store, which did a tremendous business in toys and lollipops.

It would have done any one good to see what a fine healthy race we breed in England, if he had been there

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that day. First would come the sturdy, bronzed father, striding along with steps that shook the ground. Then his handsome wife, tall, well-made, with light brown hair rippling away to the tight knot at the back of her head—a fit mother, it seemed to me, for the blue-eyed heroes of our country. Then the little children, with the fat, sturdy legs and broad backs, as if they had been trying to imitate father all their lives, and the healthy faces surrounded by the fair golden curls, through which the great round eyes gazed awestruck at this strange new ceremony. These sights gave me great confidence in the future of our country, for I felt that such healthy specimens of humanity as these must give a back-bone of common-sense to the nation, which would be proof alike against the oppression of a tyrant and the more insidious temptations of the demagogue. I am glad that I had this vision first, for it made me all the more able to contemplate the disagreeables which followed.

It was about one o'clock, after the women had gone home, that one of the Manly type of inhabitants entered the booth. He slouched up to the counter, and received his little bag, which he at once emptied and proceeded to count the money.

"Two pun eight," said he, "and that's d—d little for a fellow to live on for half-a-year. Why, the adjectived paupers are better off than that. Why ain't there more?" It happened that Mr. O'Brien was paying at the time; so, after promptly consigning the speaker to the infernal regions, he told him he might be glad to get what he had, for it was £2, 8s. more than he deserved. At this repartee there was a laugh behind, and the discontented one moved on.

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Nevertheless, I find that this work was only the key-note of a new phase of discontent which has been growing among the unemployed. By-the-by, I told you of all my efforts to get these men work, so you will be able to judge what ground they had for blaming me. Notwithstanding all this, however, the distribution was scarcely made when Mr. Manly called a meeting on the green.

He said that now that his audience knew exactly how much they had to expect from the Government, it was high time to consider their position. The average pauper, said he, received some £10 per annum, while they, the working men, to whom England owed her greatness, received £4, 16s. He refused to degrade his audience to the level of paupers, but he proposed to raise the paupers to the level of them. For what were paupers but men who could not find employment. The State, he continued, refused the pauper £4, 16s. with one hand, but gave him £10 with the other. Let the paupers rank with them. Let them have £4, 16s. like the other inhabitants, and let the £10 distributed to the paupers be equally divided between them and the unemployed.

He said there were 120 paupers and 350 of the unemployed. This made £1200 paid to paupers, and £1680 paid to the others, and if it were divided equally it meant £6 per man. Was not that better than £4, 16s.? Now, there was another thing that struck him as unfair. It was well known that the average earning in England was about £30 per head per annum. Their number was 350, about one-seventh of the working population on the estate. The pittance doled out to them amounted in round numbers to £5,

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about one-sixth of the average yearly wage. What did this mean? It meant that five-sixths of the population were monopolising the employment which should support the whole of it. Could this be allowed? he asked; certainly not. What was the remedy? It was, that these people should be told that they could not take the bread out of the mouths of others. There were seven days in a week. One-seventh of the people were out of work. The others must lie off one day a-week in turn, and resign their places to the indigent one-seventh.

He proposed that both of these schemes should be carried out, and then justice would be done to all.

He had scarcely finished, when Dawson, the man who had complained of the amount of money he received, rose and said Mr. Manly's speech did him credit; but he forgot that not every one of the 350 could apply himself to all the various trades of the other 1675 workers. What he had to propose was much simpler. Let the monopolists keep their monopoly, but let them put one-seventh of their earnings into a common fund to keep those who had no work to do.

This suggestion was most cordially received, and the meeting thereupon appointed delegates to submit the whole matter to the Assembly. The debate has not yet come on; but I have formed a very strong opinion of my own, and, as usual in such cases, I ventilate it first to you.

I much prefer the proposal of making the whole population cease working one day a-week, to that of putting one-seventh of the earnings of those who do work into a fund for the support of those who do not.

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In the first place, a cessation of work one day in a week must naturally free the minds of the people from the usual sordid cares, and give them leisure to improve themselves. If the cessation were all on one day, I would organise concerts, dramatic performances, and lectures for that day; but, unfortunately, that cannot be, and it would not pay to have these going on every day of the week.

If the Assembly would only have sanctioned the library and art school at first there might have been some employment for those at leisure, but they have lost their chance; and now to attempt to take any money out of the surplus fund for any purpose would be simply to produce a revolution in a week, besides decreasing the leisure time exactly in proportion to the money absorbed. On the other hand, I see no reason why the workers should keep the non-workers. It does not in the least follow that the proportion of workers to non-workers will be always seven to one. It might come to three to one, or even one to one, and then the temptation to be a non-worker would be so evident that I fear we should pauperise the whole population. Besides, to throw upon a worker, who may be quite capable of keeping himself, the additional obligation of maintaining one-seventh of someone else, might overtax him, and make him an invalid. Then, of course, he would join the non-workers; but it does not follow that one of the non-workers, even if he were willing, would be able to take his place, and render effective service, after being so long out of work. Nevertheless, there is no doubt of this fact—the fundamental one of *Progress and Poverty*—that all men have a right to live; and if the means of

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subsistence are so small that only half the population can be found in work, then either those who work must support those who do not, or every one must work half-time. I don't know how Mr. George would meet this case. He says that there is abundance of work for all if rents did not tend to rise; but he does not abolish rents, nor make any provision against their increase—in fact, it is to this increase that, in an increasing population, he looks for the payment of taxes. Yet I do not see how he increases work.

The equilibrium of work and workers is now kept up by emigration, or, perhaps, as the Malthusians say, by the destructive effects of want, over-population, etc., etc. If we are only deferring the pressure of want by interposing such a yearly sum as £6 odd—the figure attained by dividing my income by my population—between the people and destitution, then it seems to me merely a question of time when the population shall have so increased as either to reduce the sum per head to still greater insignificance, or to render it the sole source of income to a large section of the people. But to admit this would be to degrade *Progress and Poverty* to the level of a stop-gap for a few years, and to ask the people of England to make this enormous change simply for a temporary relief, which would in a few years make them as badly off as when they begun. This, of course, I do not admit. Will you, therefore, give me your opinion on this problem? I fear I must accede to one or other of the prayers of the deputation, for I can find no solution of the difficulty in *Progress and Poverty;* but no doubt you will be able to put me right.

On reading this letter over, a fear comes upon me

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that I am becoming essentially Malthusian. I shall dream to-night of assisting at the apotheosis of Mrs. Besant, surrounded by a gaunt bevy of Mrs. Barretts, who shower pamphlets on my head, and surround me with a mystic circle of preventive checks—made payable to bearer, I suppose. Stop, imagination! Goodbye, old fellow! Don't think I have gone mad.—Yours sincerely, H. BROADBENT.

LETTER XXIII.

The Rev. G. MASTERMAN to H. BROADBENT, Esq.

6th March 1883.

MY DEAR HARRY—I have given your letter all the consideration I had time for, and I must confess that some things have appeared to me in a light I never contemplated before. I notice you frequently say that all men have an equal right to live. I do not think this is quite what Mr. George either says or means. He says that all men have an equal right to work, if you like; but I cannot see that any one has a right to live without it.

Mr. George does not give his authority for the statement (so far as I am aware) that the earth was created for the use of all, so I presume that it is to be found in the Book of Genesis, where Adam is told that he must in future earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and not only that, but that the earth on which he is to live is cursed for his sake, so that the natural product of it will be thorns and thistles. One is always rather timid

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about quoting the Book of Genesis to men of advanced thought in the present day, because you are at once met by the assertion that geology has entirely disposed of the opening statements, and that it is reasonable to infer that the rest is metaphorical (by which is meant, that it will bear any construction that the reader likes to put upon it), or simply untrue. However, I think in this case I may quote it, because Mr. George seems to believe it.

Viewed in this light, it seems to me that no one has a right to live without work; and so your people who do not work have really no right to live, and therefore no claim to a share of the reward of those who do work. We have the same authority for saying that considerable exertion will be necessary in order to live; that the disposition (to put it in that way) of the earth is not to afford a nutriment to men; and therefore it seems to me probable that the obligation of finding a living is by no means imposed on those who are willing to work for the rest of the world, but is an obligation—in the way of a curse, if you like—imposed on every man for himself.

When I say every man, I mean every man in the possession of his faculties. There are so many who, either by reason of age or infirmity, cannot work, and are therefore a natural and legitimate tax on the workers, that I think it absolutely monstrous that the latter should be called upon to support others of their own class. I freely admit the Malthusian tendency of this doctrine, and of course do not deny that it is a Christian duty to relieve the distressed. But what I mean is, that the people who claim such relief must do so *in formâ pauperis*, pleading the common liability

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to misfortune, and not claiming it either as a right, or as more than a temporary measure. Of course I assume that society is not doing any overt act to prevent a man from working.

Therefore I think your unemployed men have no claim to any share of the return of other people's labour.

Not only this, but I cannot see that they have a right to demand even a share of the work of those who are working. In the first place, they might, by offering to do the same work for less money, supplant these people, who would then be in their position, and obliged either to emigrate or to prove that the work which they could do for the same wage was better worth purchasing than the work of the unemployed. I believe they have already done so in fact, and that these people are really out of work because they are inferior workmen. If that is the case, the effect of such a measure as sharing work would be to drive not the inferior men out of the country but the superior men.

You gave as a second reason that the stoppage of a day's work would give the people time for thinking. This may be quite true, but I very much doubt whether the thoughts of people in enforced idleness would have much value.

As at present arranged, a man is called upon first of all to keep himself. His next step up the social ladder is to maintain a family. If exceptionally vigorous or fortunate, he may amass in one year as much as would keep him for five years, or all his life, if you like, and then he can indulge in thought or leisure, or anything that suits his purpose.

But it seems to me that this primary obligation to

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find food is, as it were, the examination by which one marticulates into the university of Thought. Some people pass no more than this simple test. Others attain riches, which we may put on the level of the ordinary degree. The higher minds graduate in honours and become the famous men of their century. I do not think it in the least follows that great thinkers have become so merely because they had the leisure to think, nor that we have any reason for supposing that many thinkers are now crushed under the burden of the necessity of providing daily bread. On the contrary, most of our greatest men have raised themselves from indigence to fame, and how many of our lesser men have deteriorated when they became opulent?

Shakespeare was a poacher, Garrick and Johnson arrived in London with half-a-crown a-piece, Stephenson was a working miner, Nelson a younger son of a large and poor family.

Not only do I think that poverty is no bar to fame, but there are numerous instances where it has been the path to it. We owe Thackeray's novels to his loss of a fortune in early life. Lockhart has rendered Scott's embarrassments matter of history. Burns composed his poems while he guided his plough.

I am also lead into further reflections. I do not see, assuming that this distribution of a yearly subsidy results in permitting the whole population to work one day less per week—I do not see, I say, that you are really effecting any change in the ultimate destination of the money. It was one of your complaints against the people who at present take

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rents that they spend them in idleness and luxury. If idleness is such a baleful thing, so hurtful in its influence, so pernicious in its effects, you are taking a cup of poison from one man and doling it out by spoonsfull to twenty—infecting a whole population with the disease that strikes but a few.

You deplore the idleness of landlords: surely your schemes are not to end in bringing every one into this objectionable condition? I will go even further, and say that if any one is to be idle, I should prefer it to be some one who had been educated, so to speak, to the business rather than every one on the earth.

Who are the idle men now? They are the sons of rich fathers. They have been educated in affluence, their manners are somewhat refined by culture, they have at least had a greater chance of using their leisure well than the people on whom you propose so indiscriminately to confer it.

I could mention among my parishioners many people who have attained a certain wealth—not much, but what represented to them a fortune. Some, I am proud to say, devote their leisure to refined pursuits. But the greater part either persist in an aimless pursuit of money, simply because they can conceive of no other employment, or worse still, find an occupation in drink, or waste away a life in sloth. To such people wealth is a curse. They would be infinitely improved by poverty.

I have rambled away into a long dissertation, which you may not consider worth the paper it occupies, and have given you no help in your difficulties. My advice is, to have nothing to do with the proposition to pay the unemployed out of the earnings of

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those who work, and if you cannot avoid making every one work five days a-week, make the change only for a short time, until you can compel your prodigal sons to go back to the places where they were able at least to procure husks for themselves.

Now good-bye; I have a great deal to do to-night; so believe me, yours very sincerely,

G. MASTERMAN.

LETTER XXIV.

H. BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

10*th June* 1883.

MY DEAR GEORGE—Still more problems. If we have banished Poverty here, we have any amount of Progress. As you know, though I did my best to banish the prodigal sons, it was not easy to get rid of them, and they are here still, as objectionable as ever. They have quite swamped the Assembly which used to be so much considered here, and replaced it by their meetings on the green.

You remember that we adopted the principle of restricting every one to five days' work per week, until we could manage to reduce the population. The census returns are in for the half-year, and I am sorry to say there is no reduction; in fact, the marriages and births have slightly exceeded the deaths.

By the way, the late Miss Beldon has just presented her husband with a son, to the immense disgust of

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Mrs. Barrett. Such a fine boy; I went to see it the other day.

But to return. When we began the universal restriction of work, we got on very well for a week. At the end of that time, I am truly sorry to say that one of the ex-unemployed was brought here from Whatchester minus one arm. It seems he had taken the place of another man who minded a steam-engine. This engine drove a saw-mill by means of a leathern belt, which had slipped off, I believe, because it was too slack. I am told the proper way to readjust it would have been to stop the engine and put it on gradually in some way. Poor Jenkins did not know this, so he tried to slip it on the wheel while it was in motion. The result was, that he was caught up by one arm, and literally whirled round and round till the arm came off. Here was a case where the hospital would have been so invaluable; but of course we had no doctor, and he is being attended by the bonesetter, who, I am afraid, is not very competent. However, Jenkins is still alive, and, of course, I have made him a little allowance during his illness; not as much as I should like, because I am constantly called upon for similar benefactions, and my income, as you know, is very limited.

Jenkins' misfortune was bad enough, because I could not help reproaching myself for being the cause of this accident. But the results were even more calamitous. There was great sympathy for Jenkins in the village, and you know how apt people are to find a scapegoat of some kind in these cases.

Taking advantage of this stir, Mr. Manly promptly called a meeting. The first speaker was Dawson, who

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referred to Jenkins' accident, and said it behoved the meeting to lay the blame of it where it was due. He appealed to all if he had not foretold this, and specially recommended that, instead of sending the people into employments to get them killed off like sheep in a slaughter-house, those who could not get work should be paid a small subsidy by those who could work. He knew how it was that this measure had been defeated. They all knew the efforts that had been made to drive them out of the place, and cast them broadcast on the earth to starve or rot—what did it matter which? They were carrion—they were pariahs—they had no right to see the sun and breathe the air; and the same influence which wanted to drive them out, baffled in its vile attempts, was now endeavouring to kill them out. (I am sorry to say that here he pointed to my house, and that several people were base enough to hoot.) Manly then rose, and said that all must deplore the horrible accident, and terrible was the responsibility of those in the State who had been the cause of it. In the hands of those people, he said, was the prevention: all that meeting could do was to set about the cure. He moved that a claim be at once made against the proprietor of the engine for compensation for the injuries sustained by Jenkins, on the ground that he ought to have seen that the belt was not slack, and therefore not liable to come off, before allowing Jenkins to start work on it. I do not suppose that legally they have the slightest claim, but that makes no difference to meetings of that sort; so in a rush of sympathy the resolution was passed, and notice of claim was served on the proprietor forthwith.

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Never was a more ill-advised step! It appears that, until this accident, none of the millowners in Whatchester knew of what was going on on the estate. But the moment this motion called their attention to it, they met and passed a resolution, either to discharge every one from their mills who lived on the estate, or to insist that the services should be performed daily by the same men. Here was a nice dilemma. We could not force them to employ our workmen, nor could we afford to lose the work for so large a portion of our men. The result was, that we could distribute employment only so far as it was in the power of the State to command it.

These employments were—local government work, such as road-mending, parochial expenditure, sanitary improvements, etc.; and the ordinary labour on the farms. There was one other employment that we might have thrown open, and that was the constabulary; but it was obviously impossible to have a man policeman one day and burglar the next, as I fear, from their character, too many of our unemployed are likely to end; and besides, I had too much regard for the public safety to jeopardise it by entrusting it to the tender mercies of this class.

The Assembly also was of the same opinion, and did not hesitate to say, that rather than one of these men should be a policeman, he might starve, or anything else he liked. But they refused absolutely, in a time of disturbance like the present, to put the civil power in the hands of the disturbers, and, of course, I agreed with them.

So it comes to this: we have at the outside 300 men employed in agriculture, and about 40 men

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employed under the local government, exclusive of police. Let us say 350 men in all. The unemployed are 350 men; and it amounts to this, that I shall have to put all these men on half-time for the rest of their lives.

The worst of it is, that I don't see how this state of things would be in the least improved in a large State. Obviously, to force manufacturers to employ unskilled workmen would be to discourage industry in two ways. In the first place, manufacturers would have to have an uncommonly good business before they would go into it with this bar, and would prefer to go to some other country where it did not exist. In the second place, the good workmen would not stand for long being put on half-time. They would follow the manufactures to a country where they could work full-time without interference, and the State which really attempted to do justice to all would be left with all the worst workmen it could produce on its hands; because, of course, the bad men would not emigrate to countries where they knew they would have to stand on their merits.

Again, it is notorious that the high value of land in England is due to the dense and productive population, which can only manage to support itself by manufacturing commodities which other nations producing more food than they need will exchange with us for food. But if you drive manufactures away, the people could not live. The value of land would go down, and rents would decrease till it became necessary to reimpose taxes on the sparse remaining population. On the other hand, if you don't force people to employ those who are out of work, you must either employ

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them on State work at extravagant wages, or not employ them at all. If you do the former, you practically turn the Government service into an almshouse; and as the present funds would not suffice, you would have to tax the workers to provide for the non-workers, or those who might be called half-workers, and would further attract all the indigent of all the world into the country where everything was made smooth for them, besides driving out the real workers from the country, because they would not be able to bear the burden of taxation put upon them. If you did not employ the unemployed at all, the pittance of £5 per year would be a mere mockery to them. It would tempt them to stay in a country where they could not but starve, instead of boldly setting out to seek their fortunes elsewhere, while the periodic returns of starvation would make them dangerous members of the State, and hotbeds of insurrection.

It may be said that an increase of ten per cent. in population is a thing which cannot happen in a year as mine has done. (When I say ten per cent. I only count the 350 unemployed, and not the new-married couples and the dwellers in the new cottages, who support themselves.) But it is only necessary to check emigration from this country, which we may put down at 200,000 per annum, and take the normal increase in population, which we may put at another 200,000 per annum, and assuming our present population at thirty-five millions, we should in nine years have an increase of ten per cent., and besides all that, we should start at once with a working focus of agitation of upwards of a million landowners, or three per cent. of the population, whom it is evident we

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should reduce to poverty by thus abruptly sweeping away their means of livelihood. This latter source of agitation has not occurred here, because I have voluntarily resigned my wealth; but there are many people who perhaps could not afford to do this, and if we could reckon as I have on reducing the landowners to poverty, and in checking emigration, then it seems we might have to face a crisis in about six years, even supposing that the unsettled state of the country did not diminish rents, when it would come sooner.

All this, my dear George, is really most appalling. The more I think of it the more awful it seems. In fact I must confess that within the last few days a fearful doubt has come over me that perhaps *Progress and Poverty* may be wrong—that there may be some flaw in it. Oh! if that should happen, I don't know what I should do. Think how Colonel Maitland would triumph! Think how people would laugh at me! But nonsense—it must be true. Of course Mr. George knew about all this, and it is simply because I am not clever enough to find the solution for myself that this difficulty faces me.

Please write and advise me; and above all things I bind you over never to breathe to any one that I have even suggested a doubt as to the truth of *Progress and Poverty*.—I am, your loving friend,

H. BROADBENT.

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LETTER XXV.

H. BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

14th August 1883.

MY DEAR GEORGE—I think it is about four months since Jenkins' accident, and he is now getting better, though not fit to resume work. You can have no notion what has been the consequence of this unhappy occurrence. As all the millowners in Whatchester had stopped the interchange of men, you remember how, much against my will, I was forced to make the unemployed work alternately with farm hands and Government workmen.

This measure, I am sorry to say, has produced great harm. It has not made the ex-unemployed much more contented, and it has worked an immense amount of mischief among the farm labourers. These men naturally resent the interference with their work. They point out that they have lived on the estate longer, and have a better right to a maintenance from the land, than even the people who are in full work at Whatchester. Some of them have, father and son, been working on this identical estate for a hundred years. Their wages are not high—the average does not exceed eighteen shillings a-week; and to suddenly cut them down to nine shillings a-week is, they argue, in the highest degree unfair. In fact, it has produced deplorable misery among them; and with the misery, of course, has come discontent.

Meantime Mr. Manly has not been idle. He and his followers are by no means satisfied, though they

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do get an equal share of the work. They have therefore directed their efforts to "raising the wind" in some other manner.

They are always most plausible, as you know; and their first proposition was based on a statement in *Progress and Poverty.* You know Mr. George says, and proves his statement, that wages are not paid out of capital at all—that what the labourer receives is no gift of capital to him, but simply the equivalent of the increased value which he has conferred on the object of his labour. For example: If a man has ploughed a field, and sown the seed, and leaves the farm before reaping the crop, the incoming tenant will pay him for that labour, knowing full well that, one year with another, a crop always results from such operations, and being able to appraise what proportion of the labour necessary to produce a crop has been expended, and how much more he himself must expend. Wages, as we know, are never paid, except in the rarest instances, until the work is done, and, therefore, this payment is no more than amount paid for value received. Mr. George admits that the crop may fail; but the fact that agriculture goes on is a proof that on the average it does not fail, and the farmer can easily protect himself against this risk by paying less wage than he would if the crop were an absolute certainty; so that you have the proposition modified merely to this extent, that the labourer receives the exact reward of the value he has conferred on the land, less a slight percentage to compensate for infinitesimal chance of loss.

Mr. Manly seized upon this, the most ably-reasoned part of the whole book; and with that ingenious per-

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verseness which characterises him, put the following construction upon it. There was no doubt, he said, that what we wanted on the estate was more manufactories. There was a double advantage in them. In the first place, while they were building they gave work to the men who built them; and who so willing to work as his audience? In the second place, when they were finished, those who had built them could find employment in them. Besides all this, let them consider how they increased the rent of the land. Why, he knew of factories in Whatchester that paid six times the rent for the land on which they stood that a farmer would pay; and if the rent were increased sixfold, the surplus would be increased elevenfold, and they would all have £55 a-year without any work, and, besides that, work which would bring them in at least £50 a-year. Unfortunately, they had not at present any manufacturers, but they might have them. They would soon come when they saw how welcome they would be. In view of their arrival, he proposed to set about preparing for them. His audience were badly off now, but it behoved the State to find employment for its citizens, especially when their work conferred a benefit on the State. Every manufactory needs foundations, said he, and these have to be dug out. He believed also that cellars always came in useful. He proposed that workmen should at once set about digging foundations for two cotton mills and a brewery, and thereby enrich the State, which, in acknowledgment of the favour conferred, should make their wages a first charge on the surplus.

This resolution was carried, and presented to the

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Assembly by a strong deputation of the half-employed, who expressed their intention of remaining in the room till it was carried, and taking the news back to their constituents. I resented this as an attempt at coercion, and refused to debate till they withdrew. This at last they did; and then Mr. Paisley, after seeing that all windows were shut, spoke.

He began by saying that the prayer of the deputation could not be defended. It might be that wages were not paid out of capital, or it might be that they were; but there could be no doubt that it was useless to confer value on a piece of land unless some one was willing to pay for it. Mr. George was quite right in saying that if every business was successful, the labourer actually conferred a value when he advanced material a step in such a business. But he pointed out that the business must come first, and then the labour; because, if you worked at things simply because they produced labour, it was very likely that some of the things at which you worked would not sell. Not only that, but you might even do harm. For instance, suppose these men dug foundations over an acre of ground. If the manufacturers came, well and good; but if they did not come, they had then spoilt an acre of ground for agricultural purposes. Thus the result of this labour was not to gain the State £18 an acre, but to lose it £3. He said he worked in a mill at Whatchester, and knew that trade was very bad indeed. So far from wanting to build new mills, there was a talk of shutting down old ones, and he feared it might be long enough before we found a customer for the foundations.

Mr. Sharples then rose, and in an agitated voice

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implored the Assembly not to refuse the request of the deputation. He said that these people could not be allowed to starve, and, besides, he feared they would soon take the law into their own hands. It was a very terrible thing when you had to do with starving men, and he for his part would willingly give up all his share of the surplus for a little peace and quietness.

Miss Beldon followed, and said she would now tell what her husband had heard only last night. She had come there that day to tell it, but had been forestalled by this discussion. Well, the other night, when Jack was working in the garden, two men stopped near the high wooden fence. They could not see Jack, but he overheard their conversation. It was a plot to waylay the farmers as they came in with the money for the half-yearly distribution in August. Five or six gangs were told off to pretend to be drunk, to hustle the farmers, knock them down, and pick their pockets. This, she said, would never do; and it would be a good deal better to give up the surplus than run the risk of men's lives.

At this I rose and rebuked the Assembly. I said we must do right and fear nothing, and that rather than be dictated to by a set of ruffians, I would put them all in prison. I said that Paisley was quite right; we might spoil agricultural land; we could not whistle up manufactories where we wanted them; and I moved that the prayer of the deputation be not granted.

The speeches of Mr. Sharples and Miss Beldon had made a profound impression on the Assembly. When it came to voting they were all in favour of the

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prayer being granted; so the only thing I could do was to supply their lack of courage by using my right of veto.

This made me very unpopular; and that night the people crowded round my house and those of the members, hooting and shouting cries, such as "Down with the pinch-of-hunger men," and others more objectionable still.

This did not move me much; but in the morning the members of the Assembly came to me in a body and resigned. I begged them not to do so; but they told me pretty plainly that they did not see the fun of getting their heads caved in, and persisted in their resolution. Miss Beldon was the only one who wavered; but when Mrs. Barrett hinted that there would be no one to take care of her baby when she was gone, even she persisted in resigning.

I despised the Assembly very much for their cowardice, so I let them go, and at once issued writs for a new election. I had great difficulty in getting candidates to stand in my interest, or rather in that of my policy, because the respectable people naturally feared to assume offices which others had been obliged to resign. But Mr. Manly had any amount of candidates ready; and what with the hesitation of some to stand, the fear of the respectable voters to go to the poll, the unanimity of the Manlyites, and the zeal of their adherents, who thought success insured themselves better wages, they secured a majority, consisting of Manly, Dawson, and five followers. The rest was composed of Barrett, Paisley, Mrs. Barrett, Dixon, and Pelton. Mr. O'Brien, to my great regret, lost his seat owing to the standing army suggestion, while the

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remainder seemed infinitely relieved by their loss of power. I am very sorry to lose Miss Beldon; and it is a great change to see Mr. Manly's hostile frown, and hear his contentious speeches, in place of her pretty face and kindly sentiments. The Manlyites are delighted at their success, and soon returned to the foundation scheme. But I stopped them at once by my right of veto, and though it made me very unpopular, I will not allow myself to be influenced by their clamour.

Baulked in this measure, Manly was soon prepared with another, perhaps equally objectionable. He pointed out that the people who had at present received the greatest benefit from the measure of reform I instituted had been the farmers, because they not only continued to pay the same rent, but they got a share of the surplus, exemption from income-tax, and from the payment of rates and tithes as well. He contended there was no reason why they should get exclusive advantage of these privileges, because it made their rent unduly low, and robbed the State of what might be divided as surplus. He therefore moved that the rents should be at once raised by the amount which each farmer used to pay in rates and tithes.

Mr. Barrett did not consider the motion unfair, but objected to it on the ground of expediency. He said the only way to secure increased rents was to find some one who could pay them, and take the place of the existing tenant. He feared that to raise rents in the way Mr. Manly proposed, might, in the present depressed state of agriculture, result in our getting no tenants at all.

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This was very true, but the Manlyites had the majority and passed the motion; and as I thought they had some little ground for their arguments, and did not like to veto everything they proposed, I allowed it to pass into law. The very next day down came all the farmers on the estate and tendered the resignation of their farms. The leader was Mr. Priestley, who was visibly affected. He said he never thought it would have come to this, that a son of his father should have to come to a son of mine and give up his farm. He admitted he had made some little profit out of the change during the first twelve months, because he got his cheap provisions from the store, or a share of the surplus, and he always saved the rates and tithes. But since this system of forced labour had come in he regretted to say that not only had the profit gone, but he was in a fair way to ruin besides. The men he got now came to work as if they were conferring a favour upon him. They scamped the work and idled as much as they could. They damaged his tools, injured his horses, and, knowing that they could not be discharged, disobeyed orders. They were inferior men to his old hands, and would have had to work much harder to do the same work, but instead of that they did not work so hard. He had so far induced the rest not to give up their farms because they hoped I would be able to remove the unemployed, and did not want to increase my difficulties. But when the Assembly increased their rent and I consented, nothing was left but to resign and vacate the farms. They offered to do this at once if I had an incoming tenant, if not they would go immediately after harvest.

There could be no doubt from the demeanour of the

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others that they all agreed with Mr. Priestley; so when they retired the Assembly considered the matter.

Paisley, to my great astonishment, commenced the debate. He said wise men believed nothing that they heard and only half of what they saw, and for his part he did not believe that the farmers were as badly off as they said. Either they were behind the times so much that they could not make money even with the reduction in tithes and rates, or they were simply humbugs, who made believe they were badly off to prevent a rise in rents. He moved that we get other tenants, if only to bring the old ones to their senses.

This foolish speech, the outcome of Paisley's usual suspicion, set all the Manlyites into ecstasies. They had been almost frightened out of their resolution by the action of the farmers; but now they agreed that they must be turned out, and we must advertise for another tenant in the local papers. This was done with sore misgivings on my part; but in a day or two the advertisement was answered by a man who had been a farmer in Australia, and accustomed to cultivate large tracts. He offered to take the whole estate into his hands, retain as many of the old farmers as liked to stay as caretakers, give employment to all the people in turn, and, besides this, pay the enhanced rent.

One thing he insisted on, and that was credit for half-a-year in respect of the away-going crops, to give him time to convert them into money, and he promised to pay for them when the half-year's surplus was paid on the 24th February 1884.

All this seemed very reasonable, and I was especially glad that he entered so freely into our schemes here.

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The Manlyites were triumphant, so we sent for the man. He came; rather a greasy-looking individual, with long black hair, a dark skin, and a profusion of ornaments of all kinds, chains, rings, etc. He wore a velvet coat and waistcoat. However, he was most intelligent, a good speaker, and communicative as to his method of farming and past experiences. The only thing I did not like about him was a furtive way he has of looking at you, and avoiding your eye when you look at him; but perhaps he is simply weak in the eyes, and appearances are proverbially deceptive.

He is evidently not only a farmer, but a great philanthropist. He has schemes for educating the children, paying interest on the labourers' savings, and supplying the women with cheap clothing. In short I think he and I shall agree very well. Moreover, the Assembly was delighted with him, and unanimously agreed that he should have the farms. The farmers, also, in consideration of the employment under him at good salaries, and the entire absence of risk, willingly agreed to defer the payment for the away-going crops; and I believe he is the man to bring our experiment into working order.

I only regret that Mr. Priestley declined to stay. He has insisted either on being paid for his crop at once or on being allowed to stay in till he reaps it; and as Mr. Lestrange (the new tenant) does not care to do the former, Mr. Priestley does not go out till November. It is very sad being obliged to part with poor old Mr. Priestley; but *autres temps autres mœurs*, and I can only wish him luck somewhere else.

In the meantime, ever since Mr. Lestrange came

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things have been going like clockwork. He gives good wages and allays discontent. He silences Mr. Manly, and prevents his unpleasant proposals. In fact he is a perfect treasure. The second half-yearly distribution took place this month, and, thanks to him, there was not only no grumbling, but they *fêted* me in the village, and organised torchlight processions to my house, and cheered me when I came out to speak to them. Besides this, Mr. Lestrange invited me and all the tenant-farmers to dinner in one of the barns on the estate. The whole affair went off excellently, and there was great good humour everywhere, so much so that I should be delighted if there were such a distribution every week.—I am, your more hopeful friend,

H. BROADBENT.

LETTER XXVI.

HENRY BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

17*th November* 1883.

DEAR GEORGE—No one who has not seen it can believe what power one man has to influence his surroundings. I cannot suppose Lestrange an extraordinary man; he has made no fortune, written no work, contributed nothing to politics, and yet even such a man as this has power to restore quietude in place of confusion to 4000 of his fellows. It does not follow because our lives are not famous that they are not sublime; and I believe, in his quiet way, Lestrange makes his life sublime.

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He is never without some scheme for the benefit of others. The other day he made this generous offer to his labourers and others on the estate. He said if they would take wages half-yearly instead of weekly he would be able to raise the wages at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum, or to give them a shilling in the pound every half-year. He said he did not do this to make money, but to encourage saving, because he knew where he could invest money at 10 per cent., and this he would gladly do for the sake of the provident, and reserve nothing for himself. I believe the generous fellow is even doing more than that, for you know how difficult it is to get 10 per cent. on any investment in these bad times—I believe, I say, that he is putting the money out at some lower rate and making up the rest out of his own pocket.

But he has gone even further than that in a direction where he might with advantage be followed by other philanthropists. He knew it was not so easy for poor people to do without money for half-a-year, so he has opened a system of credit at the store, by which the people can purchase what they want, and give him as a reference, up to the amount of the surplus, and even beyond, if he permits it. He almost always does permit it; in fact, he is the banker of the State, and his wise financial measures have made every one contented. I believe the money obligations they are under to him are also the clue to his ascendancy over the Manlyites. The other day he gave the first of a series of cheap dinners to children. He bought the provisions himself, and fed them at twopence per head, giving the parents credit for the money till the end of the half-year, on the ground that he made so

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much profit out of them that he could afford to wait. I frankly told him I did not believe this, and he confessed it did not pay; but added, it was well worth the money. "One likes to think," he remarked, "that he has done at least one good act in his life." I pointed out that he had done and was doing many, but he only smiled, as if he thought it was not enough.

These few instances of his beneficence will show you how really good-hearted he is; but to hear him talk, as I do daily, would make you marvel at the range of his intellect. There is no subject which he does not embrace, and if he could only have a little time, I believe he would realise all the schemes I had at the beginning of my experiment. We have a scheme, he and I, by which we mean to resuscitate the baths, library, and other institutions of that kind. It is not yet perfect, but I see light ahead even now.

He is a most agreeable companion, and we spend night after night at my house, discussing future plans or conversing about the many different countries he has seen, and their modes of thought and government. I believe I told you that Mr. Pelton resigned his seat in the Assembly in favour of Mr. Lestrange. Since he has appeared my difficulties have vanished. I never make a proposition but he sees the force of it, and either gently exposes the error or supports it with all his eloquence. He is hand-in-glove with Mr. Barrett, the terror of Mr. Manly, whose voice is never heard now, and, to my extreme delight, he has succeeded in quieting Mrs. Barrett also. His treatment of this lady is inimitable. He half chaffs and half answers her, and always succeeds in making her lose her temper, and show up her theories in the most ludicrous way.

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So much do he and I agree on all matters, that I fear it has excited the suspicion of the ever-watchful Paisley. This gentleman scarcely hesitates to say that I and Lestrange are playing some deep game together; and Mr. Manly's utterances are now mainly confined to dark threats as to what will happen when our nefarious designs see the light. I suppose they think that because we spend so much time together we must necessarily be plotting something; but the fact is, that I am often very lonely in my house at nights, for none of the people except Lestrange are congenial companions; and as he seems to discover the same thing with regard to me, no wonder we constantly spend our evenings together.

Of course I can afford to laugh at these suspicions, because there is no foundation but the malice, or, perhaps, the envy, of Messrs. Paisley and Manly. I only regret that they have taken root among the people, who eye us askance whenever they see us together, and often do not refrain from outspoken comments as we pass.

Nevertheless, Lestrange manages to keep all things in order; and when the next distribution comes, and it is seen how he has augmented the surplus, besides giving this high interest on wages, we shall have no more of these suspicions, I hope.

In the meantime Lestrange and I have nightly discussions on *Progress and Poverty*, and kindred subjects. I am sometimes quite angry with him, because he shows by no means an implicit faith in this theory, and one of the arguments he draws from his experience in Australia seems to me irrefutable so far as it goes, but I think he pushes it to extremes.

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He asks me to consider the case of a patriarch settling in a fertile desert, just as Mr. George assumes in Book IV., Chap. 2. of *Progress and Poverty.* There can be no doubt that the fact of his settlement at any particular place renders this place more desirable to succeeding settlers than any other equally fertile spot in the desert. It is also at present his interest that other people should come and settle near him; so that both the original and the new settler work in the same direction, and thus emigration becomes more easy, and the world is more quickly covered with inhabitants. With the increase of population also comes division of labour, by which means alone large numbers of people are able to subsist on comparatively small tracts of land.

But supposing the new settler comes to the country of the patriarch, and announces himself as the nucleus of a State which will make him (the patriarch) hand over the land he has reclaimed to the new settler, or or to some one else who will pay, not the patriarch, but a collection of individuals of whom the patriarch may be one, for the privilege of occupying it. Is it not evident that the patriarch, instead of welcoming the new settler, would call out his sons, and, taking advantage of his position and knowledge of the country, would annihilate or reduce to slavery the new settler? Then new settlers would have to be supported by a force sufficient to defeat the original patriarch or those who had defeated him, and so we should recur to the ancient method of colonisation adopted by the Normans and Goths, which consisted in invading the country with force sufficient to reduce the inhabitants, instead of the peaceful methods of the present day.

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The existence of such a system would, there can be no doubt, be productive of great misery and great disinclination to emigrate, because any one who knew that the result of success in colonisation would be to attract an army to dispossess him, would be very careful not to go into new countries, and take all the trouble and risk of planting them; and intending new settlers would not go out into a howling desert, as it would appear to them; would not leave fatherland, homes, and relations till the misery of their situation was so appalling that death in a desert was preferable to the endurance of it. So far I think Lestrange is quite right, and Mr. George does not appear to have gone to simple forms of existence in working out his own theory, though he blames other political economists with great justice for the same fault.

Therefore I am prepared to admit that the only way in which Mr. George's theory could be made to work would be to graft it suddenly upon a complete society. It is a pity that such an evident measure of justice cannot possibly be applied, except at the cost of a revolution; but it by no means follows that it is not worth it.

But Lestrange goes much further than this, and argues in a manner entirely subversive of all my schemes and principles. I put him down as well as I can, but I cannot dispose of his arguments in the way that I could of Paisley and Barrett. I cannot tell why, but I am getting rather despondent. There is nothing to account for it, because I never had my State more peaceful or prosperous; but the suspicion of the people, and Manly's innuendoes, in fact everything makes me think that we are only experiencing

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a little lull before some other storm, and I am really almost wearied out with tempests. Perhaps I am ill or foolishly superstitious, so I shall invite Lestrange to see me to-night, and forget all the disagreeables in his society. In the meantime I shall look forward to the division of the surplus in February to put all things right.—I am, yours sincerely,

H. BROADBENT.

LETTER XXVII.

H. BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

22nd February 1884.

MY DEAR GEORGE—All is lost. That villain Lestrange! We are within two days of the distribution of the surplus, and the instalments for which we compounded with the Government are falling due. To pay all I relied on the half-yearly rent which Lestrange was to provide. He left the day before yesterday, ostensibly to see his bankers. I find he is on his way to America with everything—half-year's rent, poor men's wages, farmers away-going crops, and my income.

I am absolutely bankrupt—a defaulter even to the Government. What will happen when all this comes out, I do not know. The whole population is ruined. We are minus £15,000. I have lost all hope.—Yours,

H. BROADBENT.

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Telegram handed in Hull, 23rd February 1884.

Rev. G. MASTERMAN, Hull.

To Col. H. MAITLAND, Carlton Club, London.

Broadbent in great danger. Defaulting tenant has ruined people on estate. Probable riot. Please provide for his safety.

(Extract from *Whatchester Mercury* of 25th February.)

"A PHILANTHROPIST IN TROUBLE.

"RIOTING AT BLISTON.

"DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY VALUED AT £20,000.

"DISGRACEFUL SCENES.

"The village of Bliston was yesterday the scene of one of the most disgraceful riots that ever traduced our civilisation. It appears that Mr. Broadbent, a neighbouring landowner, has for the last two years been working out on a large scale the recommendations of one of the numerous political economists of the present day.

"We are informed that yesterday there should have been a half-yearly payment of wages, and a distribution, in the form of a bonus, to all residents on the property. The creditors were all assembled, and the commencement of the distribution anxiously expected, when Mr. Broadbent appeared at a window and informed the crowd that, owing to the defalcation of a tenant farmer (who, we are informed, was introduced to the creditors by himself, and has always

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been regarded as his special *protégé*), no distribution could take place that day.

"A scene of indescribable confusion ensued, which is the more easily explained when we know that almost every one of the crowd had been irretrievably ruined by the catastrophe. A band of the more exasperated, headed by a man named Manly, attacked the house from which Mr. Broadbent had spoken, and completely gutted it. A rigorous search was instituted for the unfortunate landlord, who was at last descried escaping by the back door. He was surrounded, and defended himself with vigour; but was rescued, when on the point of being overpowered, by a *posse* of police, directed by our townsman, Mr. Tomlinson. Baulked of their prey, the infuriated mob next attacked Mr. Broadbent's house. It was entered and rifled. As the last marauder left flames were seen issuing from the attic window.

"The fire-engine, under the able superintendence of Sergeant Holmes, was quickly on the spot; but before operations could be commenced it was attacked by the mob, the pipes cut, and the pump destroyed. The blazing building was then abandoned to its fate.

"What further excesses might have been committed by the mob it is difficult to say; but quietude was at last restored by the opportune arrival of Colonel Maitland, who has so long administered the property during his ward's minority, with a strong force of police.

"By their efforts the crowd was with some difficulty dispersed, and order restored.

"The casualties, considering the magnitude of the riot, were extremely slight. Manly, the leader of the

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rioters, had a leg broken in the scuffle with Mr. Broadbent, and one of his companions, named Dawson, is suffering from concussion of the brain. Several of the police, whose conduct throughout this trying day was most praiseworthy, are wounded by stones, but beyond that we hear of no personal injuries. The damage to property is considerable, and is estimated at £20,000, of which only a little may be covered by insurance."

LETTER XXVIII.

HENRY BROADBENT, Esq., to the Rev. G. MASTERMAN.

London, 14th March 1884.

MY DEAR GEORGE—I received your kind letters here, but have been able to summon up resolution to answer them only to-day. I knew you too well to believe, even if your letters had not proved it, that you would desert me in my misfortunes; but to tell you the truth, I am so ashamed of myself that I scarcely dare look even my friends in the face.

I have come here because it is far from Whatchester, and I think one loses his identity sooner in a great city like this than anywhere else. My one great fear is that some one may ask a question in Parliament, or write an article in the papers, about the riot and the failure of my experiment, and then I shall become a laughing-stock for all the world.

You ask my plans. At present I have none. It seems as if my life had been cut short. Until this

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morning I fancied myself a ruined man, but I have a letter from Colonel Maitland, who does not take so gloomy a view of the situation. One thing he advises most strongly, that I should keep away from Whatchester till this affair has blown over, and as I still seem to have some money I think I shall travel.

The gist of Colonel Maitland's letter is this: He has been at Whatchester ever since the riot, trying to put things straight. His main objects have been to banish the Manlyites and to relet the farms. As to the latter, he has been unusually successful. That dear old Mr. Priestley has behaved like a trump and come forward with an offer to take even a larger farm than he had before, and manage the others until we get a new set of tenants, on the sole condition that we recur to the old system and have no stores, surplus, or Assembly. Mr. Dixon also consents to resume his farm at a lower rent, and I believe many of the other farmers will follow his example.

In the meantime Miss Beldon has found out my address, and writes to say that she and Jack will take care of the old house, remove all the traces of the abortive hospital, and do everything, in short, except what requires money, to make it into a residence again. Jack Tomlinson offers for the present to manage the gardens and take the produce as his payment, keeping up the vineries and everything. This letter was written before the arrangement as to the farms was come to, when they thought, as did I, that I should be a poor man for many a year to come. It is just on a piece with their generous interference in my favour on that awful day, when, but for them, I should have been murdered. Never, to my dying

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day, shall I forget how Jack floored that coward Dawson as he was attacking me behind, when I was engaged with Manly; nor, if I can help it, shall Jack!

Talking about Manly brings me to the first of Colonel Maitland's efforts. He banished the prodigals in the most effective way, and without any revolution. All of them, as you can imagine, were implicated in the riot, but it would have been very difficult to bring it home to them. After all they had not done much damage, as my house was only a little cottage, and fortunately they never thought of the old house, which is half-a-mile from Bliston; so he cared less about punishing than getting rid of them. All the night after the riot he was closeted with Jack Tomlinson, who gave him the names of the prodigals, and they wrote three hundred and fifty anonymous letters like this—

> "Dawson, beware!
> The pollis has your name for this,
> He knows about the afare a few
> Years ago too. A friend."

These were all written by ten o'clock, and about eleven Jack, muffled in a cloak, went round to every door, and, giving in the letters, ran off. They were all distributed by one; and by six not a single Manlyite was left in the village except Manly himself, who, it seems, broke his leg in the scuffle with me, and Dawson, who has conclusively proved the existence of his brain by sustaining a concussion on it. Manly wrote to Colonel Maitland offering to turn Queen's evidence if he could be assured a free pardon for all past offences. Colonel

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Maitland followed up his move by posting a proclamation, giving the names of all the fugitives, and saying they were wanted by the police. This, he thinks, will banish them for ever. So much for the news of the village. Now I want to explain to you my reason for cutting short my experiment. The mere burning of a house is no reason for abandoning a measure of justice; and I think you know me too well to suppose that an injury to myself would make me sacrifice the happiness of others. But the fact is, that during the last three months I have had doubts about *Progress and Poverty*, and the reflections of the last fortnight have settled them into a conviction.

You remember, no doubt, how in 1882 Colonel Maitland very properly said that the object of my experiment was to prove, not whether rents were just or unjust, but whether they should be paid to the State or individuals. I had also to prove whether Mr. George's method of paying taxes out of rent was calculated to abolish poverty or not.

I have decided against Mr. George on all these points. In the first place, assuming the State possessed of a sufficient sum, there are probably few public purposes to which it could be put so little calculated to help the actually indigent as the remission of taxation. If you refer to a speech that I sent you two years ago, which we have frequently quoted, you will see that each head of population pays on the average £4 6s. 4d. in satisfaction of imperial and local taxation. Of this sum all the indigent man spends is 27s. 4d. per annum in indirect taxation, and by foregoing spirits and tobacco but not beer he can save 19s. even of that. He entirely avoids all other taxes. His house, being

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under £20 a-year, pays no duty. He pays neither land nor income-tax. He executes no deeds and proves no will. Therefore to remit £4, 6s. 4d. on the average all over the country is to give him the benefit only to the extent of 27s. 4d. at the outside, while the rich get the benefit of their own portion and his also. In short, Mr. George's measure is an immense stride in the direction of making the rich richer, and scarcely an attempt to make the poor less poor.

Looking at the condition of my little State as compared to the rest of the United Kingdom, I find we were exceptionally benevolent to the poor, because, at least, we gave every man £3 in the way of surplus.

But turning to the United Kingdom, in which there are eighty millions of acres, I find that—

Imperial taxation represents...	£1	2	6	per acre.
Local taxation represents	0	16	0	„
	£1	18	6	

In other words, in order to pay the taxes as at present, the rent of the land of the United Kingdom must amount to 38s. 6d. per acre per annum. A return issued in 1871 represents the average as only 35s. 6d. So I think we may take it that we should have no surplus at all to distribute; wherefore the utmost relief the poor could reap from this measure would be 27s. 4d. per head.

So, on the ground that Mr. George's measure would abolish poverty, I do not think it is to be defended for a minute.

But I do not insist upon this point, because a proper distribution of the funds would rectify it, and would

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leave intact the principle that it is better for the State to collect rents than for private individuals to collect them. I am sorry to say that not even this will bear examination. Let us trace up rent from the cradle, and imagine the son of an original settler farming his paternal acres. I may also remark in passing, that any man who, in any country, reclaims a piece of land hitherto left barren and regarded as unproductive, and who does not pay rent for it, is in exactly the position of an original settler. Since the time of his father, then, other people have followed his example, and farmed as good, and even worse, land round about him. The value of land has gone up, and if the son did not farm his father's land, some one would pay him rent rather than take the trouble to open up new land. What, then, is this rent? It is the reward of the knowledge of farming and enterprise displayed by the father—a tribute to his personal ability. Until he had the energy to develop it, the land had absolutely no rental value. If he had not succeeded in his venture, he might even have damned the future prospects of the land, by discouraging intending emigrants who saw his failure. Why should he not transmit this result of his personal ability to his son? This result of his exertions is the rent which the land will bring. His son has as much right to it in perpetuity as the son of an ironmaster has a right to the interest of his father's money in the funds. Why should we fine the successful landowner and not the successful ironmaster? Above all, why should the State have it? The State did not create the original settler; the settler created the State. You can have settlers without a State, but not a State without settlers. The State is a property

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of the citizen, maintained for his convenience; and, assuming that all citizens were agreed, they can treat the State as servant or chattel—as the farm hind or as the plough.

I discovered that I could not get any more cottages built on my estate when we established the law that a man might be bought out of the proceeds of his own industry as soon as it became profitable. Mr. George admits that leases of some kind must be granted. Why not grant the longest lease of all, that of perpetuity? Directly you begin to limit the time, you limit also the amount of work a man will spend on his land. Grant him a lease for life: he will cease to work as soon as he can live. Forbid him to lay by for his son, and the most capable citizens will cease to add to the store of wealth as soon as their personal wants are supplied. In short, limit the time of his enjoyment, and you limit the field of his ambition in any direction.

At present we perform the unparalleled feat of supporting thirty-five millions of people on eighty millions of acres. The income of our people, merely of those who pay income-tax, is four hundred and fifty millions of pounds. From land we cannot draw more than one hundred and sixty millions. Taking £30 per head as the average income over all the United Kingdom, our income is nine hundred and thirty millions of pounds. We have laid the world under contribution to produce this income. Are we to banish from the country the wealth we have thus acquired?

What do we see every day? A wealthy merchant buys land. He spends money in draining, fencing, improving. He rarely or never gets from this money

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the return he would reap in commerce. It is a convincing proof of the doggedness of our race that the process has continued so long.

Yet the money is on the whole well spent. It may not yield much per cent., but it never fails to yield something—if not to the spender, to his tenant or successor. In the meantime it finds employment for the labourer. It is not wasted in reckless ostentation, or, worse still, in debauchery. It brings the wealthy classes into contact with the poor. We can trace the weathering of many a revolutionary storm to this common love of agriculture. Withdraw or reduce this opportunity for investment, and the money will either be devoted to buying land elsewhere or be invested in the funds. The profusion is a temptation to our financiers to contract debt. The power of disposing absolutely of the land of a country is a prize held out to a foreign invader—facilities for plundering to unscrupulous ministers. In short, the State is the servant of the landowners—the landowners ought not to be the servants of the State. It is enough evidence against Mr. George's theory that it is a tremendous revolution for an illusory good. I believe I have shown, without going any further, that we may say of private property in land what Robespierre said of God, "That if it did not exist it would be necessary to suppose it."

I find, on re-reading this letter, that I have been led into a violent tirade against this theory, and yet I cannot see a word I should wish altered or unsaid. We must not forget, however, that it sprang from an honest attempt to remove an evil none the less terrible that ingenious efforts to abolish it have failed. What

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the remedy is I could not say; all I know is, that Mr. George's is not the remedy.

I intend, in the light of my past experience, to employ my travels in investigating this great social problem; and if I should discover any really promising plan, be sure I shall not be deterred by my late disaster from venturing my fortune a second time if necessary in the effort to work it out.

Meantime, if during my absence you should meet with any one who still credits this theory, you are at liberty to give him the benefit of my experience, such as it is.

All I require of you is contained in this line—

Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice

Farewell, and believe me, ever your sincere friend,

H. BROADBENT.

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